

How to Read  
Better and Faster



*By the Author*

30 DAYS TO A MORE POWERFUL VOCABULARY  
(In collaboration with Wilfred Funk)

POWER WITH WORDS

HOW TO READ BETTER AND FASTER

THE LEWIS <sup>2</sup>ENGLISH REFRESHER AND VOCABULARY BUILDER

HOW TO SPEAK BETTER ENGLISH

WORD POWER MADE EASY

RAPID VOCABULARY BUILDER

*For Children*

VOCABULARY AND SPELLING

JOURNEYS THROUGH WORDLAND



# How to Read Better and Faster



REVISED EDITION



*Norman Lewis*

THOMAS Y. CROWELL COMPANY

•*New York*

TO MARY, MARGIE, AND DEBBIE

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## Preface to the Revised Edition

As in psychoanalysis, clinical procedures in the improvement of reading form a new and highly experimental science. And, like the psychoanalyst, the therapist in the reading field learns a good deal from the people he helps. In the six years since the appearance of the first edition of *How to Read Better and Faster*, considerable experience with my students at the Adult Reading Laboratory of City College has suggested a reappraisal of techniques and a fresh approach to the subject: hence this revision. Except for chapter VIII (How to Build a Large Reading Vocabulary), chapter IX (How to Sharpen Your Intellectual Curiosity), and chapter X (How to Develop Habits of Active Thinking), which are essentially the same, this edition represents a complete rewriting with substantial additions.

I make no claim to any originality in the techniques described in the book. Most of these techniques, I believe, reflect established practices in reading clinics throughout the country; all of them represent the procedures we follow at the Adult Reading Laboratory. Every principle in the book has been tested clinically with our students, and while each person does, to a certain extent, require an individual approach, the broad techniques described in this revised edition are those that were found to be most universally effective.

In the years between editions I have had numerous professional contacts with Professor Ruth Strang, director of the High School and College Reading Center at Teachers College, Columbia University; Mrs. Beulah Ephron, of the Teachers College Reading Center; Miss Muriel Kathryn Garten, Remedial Reading Instructor of the New Rochelle public schools and a member of my staff at the Adult Reading Laboratory; and Miss Jeannette D. Nadler, of the Educational Clinic of Brooklyn College. The stimulating discussions I have held with these people have helped clarify my

thinking on the subject, and I wish, therefore, to acknowledge my indebtedness to them. However, they have not seen the manuscript of the book and are, of course, in no way to be held responsible for anything in it.

I wish to acknowledge also my thanks to John Alden Cox of the Keystone View Co., who checked the material on perception training; and to Robert Lateiner, M.D., F.A.C.S., Diplomate of the American Board of Ophthalmology and a practicing oculist in New Rochelle, who checked for scientific accuracy all material which relates to vision and visual training. And finally, I wish to thank Mrs. Lyda T. Meacham who so promptly and accurately typed the various drafts of the manuscript.

Norman Lewis

New Rochelle, N.Y.

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## Caution

Perception-training materials on pages 55-83 and 96-154 will have maximum effectiveness only if you have not previously seen them. For best results, therefore, avoid reading these pages until you have carefully studied the preceding directions, are familiar with the use of the Flashmeter card, and are ready to start your perception training.

## CHAPTER I

# Are You Reading at Your Top Level of Efficiency?

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### *Preview*

*You will learn:*

- What a few months of self-training, under guidance, can do for your reading speed and comprehension.
- The results that college reading clinics are achieving in increasing their students' speed and comprehension.
- Your normal reading speed on material of average difficulty.
- Your *potential* reading speed on such material.
- The six important rules for making your *potential* speed normal and habitual.

CHAPTER I WILL BE DEVOTED TO DEMONSTRATING THAT YOU ARE PROBABLY CAPABLE OF READING 25 TO 50 PER CENT FASTER THAN YOU ACTUALLY DO.

## What Do You Know About Reading?

Take this true-false test:

- 1. It requires years of retraining to become a rapid and efficient reader. TRUE? FALSE?
- 2. Lawyers, accountants, engineers, and adults in similar professions are likely to be slow readers because of the type of reading they do during their working days. TRUE? FALSE?
- 3. In efficient reading, infinite attention is paid to the most minor details. TRUE? FALSE?
- 4. Rapid readers generally have better over-all comprehension than slow, careful readers. TRUE? FALSE?
- 5. The average person's *potential* rate of understanding is probably 25 to 50 per cent faster than his habitual, untrained rate. TRUE? FALSE?

To check your answers, reverse the book.

1—F, 2—T, 3—F, 4—T, 5—T.



## 1. It's Up to You

Look at it this way:

If you could complete your morning or evening newspaper in half the time you now take—

If you could develop the power to respond more actively to everything you read in that paper—

If you could accomplish this after only six months of stimulating work—

Would it be worth trying?

Or look at it this way:

You now read, let us say for the sake of argument, ten books a year—

If you could finish twenty or more without spending one extra minute on your reading—

And could learn to get more out of those books than you ever thought possible—

If you could learn to sail through the serious books as easily as you now read a light novel or detective story—

Would that be worth a few months of earnest effort?

Or take some other possibilities:

You are a business executive, and scores of papers come to your desk each day: reports, trade journals, minutes of meetings, clippings pertinent to the affairs of your firm. Each must be read, quickly but accurately; it is important, perhaps crucial, that you be able to glance through a page for a few seconds and pull out the essential points, the main ideas. You can't go slow; in a busy day there simply isn't time to examine every word, to ponder every detail. You know that you must develop the ability to push through material at top speed.

Or you are a lawyer, an accountant, a tax expert, an engineer, a scientist, an editor, a proofreader. During your professional day

you must read slowly, carefully, word by word in some instances, because every syllable, every punctuation mark, every subtle implication has to be studied and examined. And so you have built up habits of careful, minutely analytical, snail-paced reading, 'with infinite attention to minor details. The result? Your reading at the office or plant is efficient enough—efficient for the type of reading you are required to do professionally. But when you try to do reading of another sort, light, general reading purely for enjoyment and relaxation, you find (naturally enough) that your office habits have spread over into your personal life, and it takes you an hour to cover a long magazine article, a month or more to finish a novel. You note this phenomenon first with surprise, then with increasing annoyance, for you are getting practically no reading done after working hours.

Or you are a college student, and in the time it takes you to absorb a few pages in a textbook your classmates are able to cover two or three chapters. Despite the hours of study you devote to your subjects, you're falling behind. And you begin to suspect the reason: your reading is too slow, too poky, too time consuming.

Now—whether you are a student, a professional man (or woman), or a business executive—if you felt convinced that six months of self-training would materially increase the speed and efficiency of your reading, would you consider it time well spent?

You are now holding in your hands a book which aims to help you achieve all the goals described above.

But merely owning this book is not enough.

You must use it—intensively, faithfully, honestly.

You must not skip one single page.

You must not let anything stop you from methodically completing your job from beginning to end.

*And, most important, you must be willing to work hard.*

For there is no royal road to good reading.

Skillful reading is not an instinct which some people have and others lack.

It is not a natural aptitude.

The ability to read at all is a skill that you've developed by hard practice over a period of many years. (But was it the right kind of practice?)

The ability to *read efficiently and rapidly* is a skill that can

be developed only by analyzing your present reading habits, rooting out bad ones, and substituting good.

The ability to *read responsively and actively* is an art over which you can gain mastery only through persistent and intelligent practice.

When the analysis is made, when the good habits are learned and the bad habits eliminated, when practice is piled on practice, the results can be spectacular.

But do not be misled into thinking that efficient reading is easy to master. If you go through this book conscientiously, you have weeks and months of very hard work ahead of you. Hard, but stimulating and encouraging from the start—for every small skill you master effects a noticeable change in your reading habits. And when you have turned the last page of this book, you will find that you are reading:

1. with greater speed,
2. with increased understanding,
3. with more comfort and enjoyment,
4. with heightened responsiveness,
5. and with an over-all efficiency you might once have thought hardly possible.

But remember the requirements: *hard work, persistent effort, unswerving determination.*

For this is not one of those books you can finish in a single evening. It is not the sort of book you can pick up at odd moments or dip into at random.

And it is not a fifteen-minute-a-day panacea.

Fast, efficient reading requires work, perseverance, determination, and intelligent, conscientious practice under expert guidance.

*But it can be done.*

## 2. What College Reading Clinics Are Accomplishing

Is there any reason for feeling confident that efficient reading can be learned in a short time?

There are many reasons—and all of them are backed up by scientific findings, by laboratory results. That anyone of normal intelligence can learn to read better and faster is not a theory; it is a fact.

It is a fact which has been established in the reading clinics

of dozens of colleges throughout the country. Here are a few random but representative examples:

At the University of Florida,<sup>1</sup> 175 adults took a three-month reading course, meeting once a week for a four-hour session. The group was composed of business men and women, teachers, lawyers, ministers, a newspaperman, housewives, clubwomen, and two superintendents of schools. At the start of the course, 111 students were reading at the rate of 115 to 210 words per minute, or no better than the seventh-grade primary-school level. Twelve weeks later almost all had shown spectacular improvement, 52 out of these 111 slowest readers sailing along at a rate of 295 to 325 words per minute—high school and college level. While only 20 per cent of the 175 adults had been able to read at college speed before training, over 40 per cent could do so before the course was over. And when you bear in mind that increased speed is not an end in itself, but rather a symbol of better comprehension and generally augmented skill, you can fully appreciate the sensational achievements of these poor readers after only a few months of training.

Another example: Dr. Robert M. Bear, director of the reading clinic at Dartmouth College reports:

In the ten years that we have been helping Dartmouth students improve their reading, I have seen few freshmen who read nearly as rapidly and efficiently as they should—and could after a little training. Year after year, our reading classes start off at an average of around 230 words per minute, and finish up a few weeks later at around 500 words per minute.

And still another: At Maxwell, Alabama, is the headquarters of the Air University of the U. S. Air Force. Here a reading clinic has been set up under the direction of Dr. Murray Lincoln Miller, and thousands of Air Force officers have been taught to increase their speed of reading. The two principal methods used are *exercises on digits* to train instantaneous perception (an adaptation of this very fruitful method will be found in chapter III) and *reading on the Reading Rate controller*, a device containing a shutter which moves down a page of print at a rate that is controlled electrically. By setting a simple control, the student can govern the speed at which he is forced to assimilate and understand material.

<sup>1</sup> According to a report by John A. Broxson in the *Peabody Journal of Education*.

And the results? Let me quote from the Air University Reading Improvement Letter of April, 1949:

59 officers, after 10 laboratory hours of training, increased from 305 words per minute, 75% comprehension, to 537 w.p.m., 78% comprehension.

26 officers, after 16 laboratory hours of training, increased from 305 w.p.m., 75% comprehension, to 582 w.p.m., 74% comprehension.

470 officers, after 17 hours of laboratory training, increased from 310 w.p.m., 85% comprehension, to 580 w.p.m., 87% comprehension.

These statistics, startling as they may sound, are not unusual—they prove that tremendous gains can be made by adults who are trained to read at their maximum potential rate of comprehension.

(Much of the work that you will do in chapters V, VII, and XI of this book will be similar to the training given to Air Force officers on the Reading Rate Controller.)

And a final example: At the Adult Reading Laboratory of the City College of New York, a group of fourteen students, at the end of a twelve-week training period in faster reading, recorded an average arithmetic gain in speed of 69.1 per cent. Notice some of the radical improvements in rate in the chart below.

STUDENT	START OF COURSE		END OF COURSE	
	Rate (Words per Minute)	Compre- hension (%)	Rate (Words per Minute)	Compre- hension (%)
A .....	237	100	360	100
B .....	400	100	675	100
C .....	325	100	540	100
D .....	289	85	540	100
E .....	237	92	540	90
F .....	217	95	337	95
G .....	260	100	386	100
H .....	237	95	540	100
I .....	217	80	337	90
J .....	434	100	600	100
K .....	325	100	514	100
L .....	237	90	416	100
M .....	237	60	360	80
N .....	306	100	540	100

Reports from college reading clinics underline two facts:

1. The average person reads unnecessarily slowly and inefficiently.

2. After a comparatively short period of intensive training, such a reader can add considerably to his speed, can improve his comprehension, and can increase his over-all efficiency.

You are now starting on such a course of intensive training. This book is both your classroom and your teacher. And for your first assignment you will be asked to make an analysis of your present reading speed and comprehension.

### 3. How Fast Do You Read?

At first thought, you might conclude that the principal value of rapid reading is to save time. There you would be wrong. If you read quickly, you do, of course, save time; but, far more important, you understand better what you are reading. *The faster your habitual reading rate, the keener your comprehension:* that is the discovery made in recent years by reading clinics in dozens of colleges throughout the country.

Why is this true? Because, say the professors, rapid reading is an indication of general reading skill; and the adult who is in the habit of cruising through a page of print at about 400 to 500 words per minute is getting far more out of his reading than the person who laboriously plods and bumbles along at 100 to 150 words per minute.

To arrive at an approximate gauge of your reading speed, time yourself to determine exactly how many minutes and seconds you require to finish the following selection. Directions for measuring your speed and comprehension will be found on page 13.

#### *A Test of Your Present Reading Speed*

Read the following selection *at your normal rate*, and once only. Your aim: 100 per cent comprehension of the main ideas.

## SPEAKING OF BOOKS

by J. Donald Adams<sup>2</sup>

**Start timing**→Nobody is in a better position to observe the reading tastes and preferences of the American book-buying public than the members of the Book-of-the-Month Club's Committee on Selection. They have an unexcelled vantage point from which to survey whatever change and growth there may be in the attitude of that public toward contemporary books. Subscribers to the club's service are not obligated to accept the committee's choice; they may, if they wish, indicate a preference for any other book on the club's recommended list, and since careful records are kept of the choices made by subscribers every month, the club is enabled to chart such fluctuations as may become apparent.

In view of these facts, and the additional one that the club's membership is now in excess of half a million subscribers, this department was greatly interested in the article on "American Readers and Books" which Dorothy Canfield Fisher, who has been a member of Committee on Selection since the club's inception, contributes to the current *American Scholar*. Mrs. Fisher writes as one who, when she took up her duties seventeen years ago, had already behind her a ripe experience in the world of books, both as an intelligent observer and as a novelist of distinction.

What, then, are her conclusions? She begins by emphasizing the sorry truth that we can scarcely think of ourselves as a nation of book buyers when we compare our record in this respect with that of Europe before the war.

Nor, rich in public libraries as we are, do they reach everywhere they should. Even in New York City only 22 per cent of the population are registered as borrowers of public-library books—an average of 3.19 books per person a year; a town like Keene, N.H., whose quota reaches 6.67 books per person, strikes near the national average. And furthermore, the books taken out by children account for approximately half of these.

Mrs. Fisher quotes with horror the statement made by a large city librarian that the peak of reading for Americans comes between the ages of 13 and 22; "in other words, during the years

<sup>2</sup> From *The New York Times Book Review*. Reprinted with permission of the author. Mr. Adams is former Editor and at present Contributing Editor of *The New York Times Book Review*.

when they are under pressure to read because of the demands of teachers and the examinations they must pass." But isn't Mrs. Fisher forgetting that, until old age gives another opportunity, this is normally the fullest reading period for men whose best energies are otherwise engaged during the years that follow?

Much as I conceive of education as properly a continuous process, I believe the reading done between the ages of 13 and 22 can be the most important and fruitful reading of our lives. It is not by any means composed entirely of required, directed reading; for young people of lively intelligence (and it is the character and quantity of *their* reading that is of the greatest importance) it includes also the most exciting adventures of the mind many of them will have in the course of their lives—reading which is every day opening up for them new vistas of thought and action.

The fact remains, of course, that we are not yet a sufficiently book-conscious country, though I believe we are fast becoming one. The greatly increased amount of space given to books in our newspapers and magazines (in which, indeed, many people now read their books), and now the rapid multiplication of cheap reprints and of new outlets, promise to effect a radical change in our reading habits as a nation.

Though Mrs. Fisher is properly wary of drawing any hard and fast conclusions based on her Book-of-the-Month-Club experience, valuable as it has been, she is ready to offer a few tentative conclusions. Thus her reading of the evidence suggests that "not light and trifling, but serious fiction of good literary quality is what readers want." In months when a good novel is not available there seems to be a marked preference for travel books, "or at least books about other places and peoples." Biography and autobiography follow close behind. Recently, of course, there has been great interest in books about the war. Books on economics are least favored among those devoted to current topics, and Mrs. Fisher thinks one person's guess as good as another's as to the reason why. My own is that good writing, with sufficient human emphases, is too seldom encountered in that field, and I would say the same for that other pseudo-science, sociology. Science itself stands low on the general list, and religion lowest of all. Yet several novels with religious themes have recently stood high on the best-seller lists, and such books as Henry C. Link's "The Return to Religion" and Harry Emerson Fosdick's "On Being a Real Person," which



implement religion with the tools of modern psychology, have had a large and continuing sale.

Nothing emerges more clearly from the evidence, Mrs. Fisher thinks, than that "this mass of anonymous American readers have no patience with book trash in any form." I do not think her report is a discouraging one, and I believe it to be immeasurably more heartening than it could have been forty years ago. ←**End timing**

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_\_ SEC.

### COMPREHENSION TEST

In each group below there are three statements, one of which is false. Check the *incorrect* statement without, of course, referring to the selection.

#### Group A:

1. The Book-of-the-Month Club Committee on Selection observes, rather than molds, the reading tastes of the American public.
2. Subscribers to the Book-of-the-Month Club must accept the choices of the Committee.
3. Careful records are kept of the subscribers' choices.

#### Group B:

1. Americans buy far more books than Europeans did before the war.
2. Less than 25 per cent of New Yorkers are registered borrowers at the public libraries.
3. The New York average of the number of books borrowed per person is under the national average.

#### Group C:

1. A large city librarian claims that most Americans read more books between the ages of thirteen and twenty-two than at any other time in their lives.

2. This statistic horrifies Mrs. Fisher.
3. Mr. Adams disagrees with the librarian's statement.

*Group D:*

1. Mr. Adams believes that between the ages of thirteen and twenty-two few readers are mature enough for their reading to be very fruitful.
2. All of the reading done between the ages of thirteen and twenty-two is not by any means required or directed reading.
3. Reading opens for these people new vistas of thought and action.

*Group E:*

1. Although Americans are not sufficiently book-conscious, they are rapidly becoming so.
2. Our reading habits are in for a radical change.
3. The cause of this change is the spectacular intellectual growth of the American public.

*Group F:*

1. Readers want serious fiction of good literary quality, according to Mrs. Fisher.
2. When serious fiction is not available, light and frivolous novels are very popular.
3. Books on economics are generally not very popular.

*Group G:*

1. Mr. Adams believes that good writing is seldom encountered in books on economics and sociology.
2. Books on science and religion are always highly popular.
3. Religious books which are written from a psychological point of view have had a large sale.

*Group H:*

1. American readers are, unfortunately, too indiscriminating to tell good books from bad.
2. Mr. Adams does not find Mrs. Fisher's report a discouraging one.

3. Indeed, the report is more encouraging than it might have been forty years ago, according to Mr. Adams.

Key: A—2, B—1, C—3, D—1, E—3, F—2, G—2, H—1.

Now consult the chart below to determine your *normal rate* of reading of material of average difficulty; then record the results of your first speed test in the appropriate blank.

#### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
1 min.	870	3 min., 45 sec.	232
1 min., 15 sec.	696	4 min.	217
1 min., 30 sec.	580	4 min., 15 sec.	205
1 min., 45 sec.	496	4 min., 30 sec.	193
2 min.	435	4 min., 45 sec.	184
2 min., 15 sec.	382	5 min.	174
2 min., 30 sec.	358	5 min., 15 sec.	166
2 min., 45 sec.	316	5 min., 30 sec.	158
3 min.	290	5 min., 45 sec.	152
3 min., 15 sec.	268	6 min.	145
3 min., 30 sec.	249		

YOUR NORMAL READING RATE: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

(This statistic will be used throughout the book as a basis of comparison.)

You have just completed a severe test of your reading ability, so do not be discouraged by a low score in comprehension, and especially do not lose heart over a slow rate. Your improvement program is still ahead of you. Keep in mind that your ultimate goal is 100 per cent comprehension, with a rate of 400 to 500 words per minute on material as difficult as, or more difficult than, the selection you have just finished. Everything you do from now on until the last page is turned will help toward the achievement of that goal.

#### 4. Proof That You Can Read Faster

At least one thing about reading is definite:

*The average person reads 25 to 50 per cent slower than he is capable of reading.*

Term after term in the Adult Reading Laboratory at City College I demonstrate the truth of this statement to my students.

At the first meeting of the class we start with the piece on which you have just timed yourself ("Speaking of Books," by J. Donald Adams).

"Read this selection," I say, "exactly as you always read. Pretend you are at home in your favorite easy chair. Just read."

And I time the performance with a stop watch, noting the passage of every fifteen seconds on the blackboard.

I have been doing this for years—and rarely has there been a deviation from the following standard pattern:

Approximately thirty-five out of my forty-five students finish the piece at the rate of 193 to 249 words per minute—the average reading speed of the untrained adult, *but also the normal reading speed of sixth- and seventh-grade elementary school pupils*. This result may sound shocking, but the fact is that an average adult considerably cuts down his reading—especially his reading of books—after leaving school, and particularly for that reason his speed drops back from the high school and college level of 295–325 words per minute to sixth- and seventh-grade speed.

That leaves ten students who fall below or above the average. About half of them read the piece at a college-level clip of 325 to 350 words per minute; the other half, abnormally slow, bumble along at 145 to 174 words per minute, the same rate at which their own children of ten or eleven (if they have any) would be able to go through the class readers of the fourth and fifth grades.

These forty-five adults have come to my class because they're troubled and unhappy about their reading. Slow reading, they have come to realize, means awkward, unsatisfying reading. They see their friends cover the same ground in half the time—and with twice the enjoyment and ability to recall what they've read. They wonder if they can't spend a few months in practice so they can catch up with their speedier friends.

After my students have examined their first statistics and have been properly chagrined to learn that they are reading no better than children in the middle and upper grades of elementary

school (for, of course, speed is tied up with comprehension—the quickest comprehenders are naturally the quickest readers, other things being equal), they invariably ask the obvious question: “Can we increase our speed by the end of the course?”

“You can do better than that,” I answer. “You can increase your speed tonight—before you leave the classroom.”

Then I distribute another column by J. Donald Adams, a piece of comparable length and difficulty.

“Now,” I say, “understand this about yourselves. The probability is very great that you are reading slowly simply because you have developed lazy habits. You are unwilling to jog your minds. You find that you can *comfortably* react to the message of printed words at a certain speed—a comparatively low speed, as you’ve discovered tonight. You have got into the habit of sauntering leisurely along a mental countryside when you should push along briskly and with a purpose—the purpose of finding the *meat* of an author’s ideas in the quickest possible time. You occasionally stop and admire the intellectual scenery, you sometimes retrace your steps to make sure you’ve seen *everything* when you should push ahead with the exclusive desire to get an over-all view. The result? You read at elementary school speed.

“I am going to let you prove to yourselves that you can do better—much better.

“When the signal is given, jump right into this new selection, follow the main thread of the ideas, keep going at a consciously fast pace. Feel that you’re going *fast*, but not so fast, of course, that any comprehension is lost. You may miss the full flavor or meaning of certain words, or of occasional sentences. No matter. Keep right on pushing. Try it as an experiment and see what happens. Remember—the idea is to get the main thought of the selection quickly.”

I give the signal and they start to read. If you could watch these people now, you would see an actual *physical* change in them. They are visibly alert—they have mobilized themselves for reading—and it is apparent that they are now concentrating far better than at their first attempt, when they were reading normally, overrelaxed. Now they are working at reading. You can see that they are immersed—totally immersed—in the material; there is an air of concentration about them that was conspicuously absent a few minutes before. As you will shortly discover for yourself when you train to speed up your own reading, it is impossible *not* to

have sharper concentration when you consciously read for faster understanding of main ideas.

So the second test is over, and again we gather statistics. When I say to you that my students are flabbergasted, I am making an understatement. Some of them simply cannot credit the evidence. The great bulk of the class, who read the first selection at 193 to 249 words per minute, get through the second piece in the neighborhood of 300 words per minute—a minimum immediate improvement of 25 per cent. The few faster readers do even better; to use the words of one of my students some years back, it is as if “we had suddenly dropped our shackles.” These 325–350-word-per-minute readers, without exception, can get through at well over 400 words per minute, an expert, efficient speed. And the very slow ones? They’re still reading slowly. The technique I am describing has virtually no effect on pathologically slow readers. For them, there are deep-seated causes of slow reading that cannot be eliminated by jogging them out of lazy habits. Perhaps they are lip-movers, or have severe visual or language or emotional handicaps; one or two may simply be inexperienced in the process of getting thoughts from the printed page. We set up a special remedial class for such students and start a long-range plan of re-education, almost as if they were learning to read all over again in the first grade.

Except for the very slow readers, my students are now convinced that they have the *ability* to perform faster. All they need to do from that point on is read in such a way that the *ability* to perform becomes *habitual performance*.

You, too, have the ability to read much faster if you fall (as you possibly do) in the vast average group of 193–249-word-per-minute readers or in the smaller, more select, group of 325–350-word-per-minute readers.

The next few pages will convince you.

Directly below you will find another article by J. Donald Adams, a piece similar in style, difficulty, and length to the one on which you have recently determined your ordinary reading speed.

While the *material* will be similar, your attitude must be very different as you read. Aim to understand the ideas more quickly by mobilizing yourself for quick reading. Get the thoughts *fast*, do not get bogged down in details, just follow the main thread. If occasionally a word eludes you, or a thought is somewhat fuzzy, keep plowing right through nonetheless. Read under slight speed

pressure and with a purpose—the purpose of getting the main thought quickly. Get in, get the thought, and get out. Do not read words; rather, absorb *thoughts*, *ideas*. Move along rapidly, but of course do not lose any comprehension, for your primary purpose in all reading is understanding, not speed. But you will be attempting to discover whether you cannot, eventually, be a much faster reader than you are today. Again, time yourself in minutes and seconds.

### *A Test of Your Potential Reading Speed*

Read the following selection through rapidly, aiming at a quick understanding of the central theme.

#### SPEAKING OF BOOKS <sup>3</sup>

by J. Donald Adams

**Start timing**→One of this department's readers has a theory about the appeal of mystery stories which seems to me worthy of a little thought. As I turned it over in my mind it occurred to me that possibly my correspondent's suggestion might apply equally well to Westerns, to spy stories and to tales of adventure in general. Her idea is that the popularity of the mystery story may in part be accounted for by the simple fact that in such tales, "justice inevitably triumphs, the wicked are punished, the character with whom the reader is usually bound up is on the side of the angels—all in terms, actually, of the fairy tales most of us absorbed in earliest childhood, as well as in terms of what many of us have come to believe ultimately happens, although not in external circumstance, to 'actual living beings.'"

Do I hear a snort of impatience from the inveterate addicts of the "whodunit"? Do I hear them loudly insist that the sport of reading mysteries lies wholly in matching your wits against those of the author, that the appeal of the detective story is solely that of solving a jig-saw puzzle, plus a few hours' blessed release from tomorrow's problems? I'm not so sure that such protestations are entirely correct.

<sup>3</sup> From *The New York Times* Book Review. Reprinted with permission of the author.

My correspondent would not argue, I feel sure, and neither shall I, that her theory constitutes anything like a full explanation. But there seems to me little doubt that the characteristics to which she calls attention do play a part in swelling the ranks of mystery story readers. That the appeal of these characteristics is not peculiar to the mystery story is amply proved by the fact that many, if not most, of its addicts will not touch a Western or an adventure story with a ten-foot pole. They would rather, if matters came to a show-down, be caught reading "How to Win Friends and Influence People," or the Elsie books.

Well and good; the fact remains that, as any case-hardened devotee of books beginning with the figure slumped in a library chair will confess, if the author succeeds in enlisting his sympathy or his admiration for a character whom he is led mistakenly to suspect as the guilty person, our addict feels himself outraged and betrayed. But when that sinister, cruel-lipped elderly man with the strange scar on his temple turns out to have been the wielder of that curiously wrought Eastern knife with which the dead man's throat was cut from ear to ear, our "whodunit" fan sighs happily and snaps off the bedside light. Evil has been smelled out, and the demands of a just world have been satisfied.

Personally, I feel some trepidation in discussing the whys and wherefores of mystery fiction, because, although I have read a fair amount of the best in the field, I am by no means qualified to offer myself as a tried and true fan; most of my reading in that blood-stained category has been done in those infrequent periods when I have been confined to my bed. Of Sherlock Holmes in the days of his prime I make an exception—but then, isn't there Sherlock Holmes, and after him all other detectives; Professor Moriarty, and after him all other diabolic master-minds?

Incidentally, may such an obvious impostor as myself put forth one or two apologetic queries on this sacred ground? I wonder sometimes, for example, why the man from Scotland Yard, or the chief of our homicide bureau at home, must always be presented as having the mental agility of my old friend Zip, whose egg-shaped cranium used to bob above the crowd as it circulated below the platforms of the freaks in the basement of Madison Square Garden. Wouldn't it be possible, just *once*, for the brilliant young attorney, or the debonair young man about town, or the eccentric young Egyptologist, who is always ready at the drop of a hat to forsake his ordinary pursuits and confound those



dumb professionals with his cleverness, to be himself the butt of our derision and contempt?

And must the young female who always accompanies the amateur criminologist on his self-appointed rounds be such an adoring nit-wit? Mr. Holmes, it seems to me, whose affairs are not unadorned with personable young women, ordered these matters better, and kept such dear young creatures as he introduced from getting under the feet of the Master.

But no more of these plaintive protests. My correspondent would agree, I think, that besides the triumph of justice and the punishment of the wicked, besides the pleasure of exercising his wits and forgetting his troubles, the mystery reader is held also by the strange fascination which violence in any form has for the human race; the particular appeal which the sadistic and the horrible seem to have for so many people in our time; and the participation in events which lie outside the ordinary round of living. Some or all of these make up, in each reader's case, the appeal of the mystery story.

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Which *one* of the following statements most accurately summarizes the *central theme* of the selection you have just finished?

1. Most mystery story readers do not care for adventure books.
2. The appeal of the mystery story lies in the chance it gives a reader to see wickedness punished; to exercise his wits in the solution of a puzzle; to participate vicariously in acts of violence; and to escape from the humdrum patterns of his own living.
3. The popularity of the mystery yarn is due primarily to the opportunity it gives the reader to solve a sort of jig-saw puzzle.
4. Justice always catches up with wrongdoers in mystery and adventure stories.
5. The characters in mystery and detective stories run too much to a pattern.

*Key:* The answer is given in somewhat cryptic form so that you will not inadvertently discover the correct response before

making your own choice. The number of the statement which best summarizes the central theme can be found by subtracting six from seven and adding one.

Now determine, from the following chart, your potential rate of reading of average difficulty material.

#### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
1 min.	850	3 min., 45 sec.	227
1 min., 15 sec.	680	4 min.	213
1 min., 30 sec.	567	4 min., 15 sec.	200
1 min., 45 sec.	486	4 min., 30 sec.	189
2 min.	425	4 min., 45 sec.	179
2 min., 15 sec.	378	5 min.	170
2 min., 30 sec.	340	5 min., 15 sec.	162
2 min., 45 sec.	309	5 min., 30 sec.	155
3 min.	283	5 min., 45 sec.	148
3 min., 15 sec.	261	6 min.	142
3 min., 30 sec.	243		

YOUR POTENTIAL READING RATE: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

You have probably proved to yourself, as a result of these tests, that you can read faster—25 to 50 per cent faster or more.

But, you are probably thinking, "It was far from comfortable, and I am not quite as sure of my comprehension as I usually am in my slow, lazy, reading."

You're right, completely—on both counts. An average, slow, reader cannot become a rapid, efficient, reader overnight—even though a start in the right direction can be made within five minutes, as you have already discovered for yourself. It is up to you, now, to set the new rate, making it just as comfortable as the old rate used to be, getting back a full feeling of comprehension despite your radically increased speed.

## 5. The Six Basic Rules for Faster Reading and Better Comprehension

There are the six principles to follow (and they are principles to which we shall pay the closest attention throughout this book) if you wish to transform your potential speed, under pressure, into a normal, comfortable, habitual speed:

1. *First, of course, you will have to read.* You will have to read much, much more than you are now in the habit of reading. If you're a slow reader, you very likely do little more than go through the daily papers and a few light magazines. You read whenever you happen to have a few spare minutes, you read merely to pass time. From now on, *you must make time for reading.* My students at City College allocate at least three evenings every week, and at least two full, continuous hours during those evenings, for the reading of books. Speed can be developed into a permanent habit only if you do what naturally fast readers have always done, from childhood on: read a lot. That means at least a full book every week; that means several evenings of concentrated reading every week. Unless you develop the habit of reading for two hours or more at a stretch, several stretches every week, do not expect ever to become a good or a rapid reader.

2. *Read for main ideas.* Stop wasting time on details. When you read a short story, follow the thread of the plot, consciously look for and find the "conflict," instead of just meandering through words. When you read a novel, get a quick, over-all view. When you read nonfiction, be intent on getting the theme, the message, the framework on which the author has built his book. Don't let an occasionally perplexing paragraph, page, or chapter slow you up. Keep speeding through. As the complete picture is filled in by rapid over-all reading, the few puzzling details will either turn out to have been inconsequential or will be cleared up as you move along.

3. *Build your comprehension.* Fast readers are good readers. They're fast because they have learned to understand print quickly, and they understand quickly because they give themselves constant practice in understanding. To this end, they read challenging material; and you must do the same. Does a novel sound deep; does a book of nonfiction seem difficult; does an article in a magazine look as if it will require more thinking than you feel

prepared to do? Then that's the type of reading that will give you the most valuable training. You will never become a better reader by limiting yourself to easy reading—you cannot grow intellectually by pampering yourself. Ask yourself: Do I know more about myself and the rest of the world, as a result of my reading, than I did five years ago? If your honest answer is no, then you'd better get started, today, on a more challenging type of reading than you've been accustomed to.

4. *Budget your time.* Say to yourself: I have this novel and I want to finish it by tomorrow night. And then get into it. If you know that you must finish half the book tonight and the other half by tomorrow, you'll speed up, because you'll have to. You'll develop tricks of getting ahead, of skimming parts that are less essential, of looking for main ideas, of reading at your top potential rate. The good reader always has a feeling of going fast, but he's never uncomfortable, for he has developed fast habits. Indeed, after a while, an adult who trains himself to read rapidly will find his original slow pace uncomfortable.

Or say to yourself: I am going to finish this magazine, complete, getting what I want out of it, in two hours. And, such is the adaptability of the human mind under pressure, you *will* finish it in two hours. It is amazing what people can do if they really try. Why not put yourself to the test?

While you are training with this book, give yourself a time limit on whatever you read—and live up to that time limit. In this way you will mobilize yourself for reading as an intellectual pursuit, and only in this way will you train yourself to understand at your highest potential rate.

5. *Pace yourself.* When you start a new book, read for quick understanding for fifteen minutes. Count the number of pages you've finished in that time, multiply by four, and you have your potential speed for that book in pages per hour. (Of course, some books are slower reading than others—it takes more time to cover fifty pages in the Kinsey report than in *Forever Amber*, though they deal with the same subject. The more solidly packed the ideas are on a page, the more time it will take to cover that page. But throughout a given book, all the material will likely be on the same level.) Keep to that rate that you've set for yourself in pages per hour.

By this means, you will learn to devise personal tricks that will speed you up and that will, at the same time, sharpen your

comprehension. But you must practice every day, or nearly every day, if you wish to make high speed comfortable and automatic, if you wish to become an expert in quicker understanding.

6. *Learn to concentrate better.* There are no special tricks for concentrating, and none are necessary. Every person of normal intelligence can concentrate when he reads, but slow readers put themselves at a disadvantage. If, through laziness, you read at a slower rate than the rate at which you are able to comprehend, there is great temptation for your mind to wander. The brightest child in a class is not always the best student. If the work is too easy for him, he becomes bored and stops paying attention. This is a perfect analogy to explain why a slow reader picks up a book or magazine, goes through a few pages, and, finding his attention wandering, puts it down and turns to something else. By reading always at your top comprehension speed, you constantly challenge your understanding, you stimulate your mind, you get involved in the author's thoughts without half trying. And, as an added dividend, you soon find that the increased concentration you get from speedy reading sharpens your understanding and enjoyment, for every distracting thought is pushed out of your mind.

But reading *about* the principles of efficient and rapid reading is not going to make you a faster or better reader. Only putting those principles *into practice*, over a period of time, can do that for you. How long will it take? That depends on what sort of person you are and how assiduously you apply yourself. Under prime conditions, habits of speed and perfect comprehension can become automatic in five or six months. This is not theory—my students, all average people, do it every term; but they work hard!

And when you get twice as much reading done in less time, and get twice as much out of your reading, you'll agree it was six months well spent.

The important thing is that you now *know* you can read faster. *From this point on, it is up to you to start doing it.*

It will be an adventure, I can promise you that.

This book will be your guide every step of the way. Exercise after exercise, drill by drill, your ordinary speed will be built up until it reaches the potentially rapid speed of which you now know that you are capable. When that point is reached, you will be reading all material of average difficulty at the rate you were

able to attain in the second J. Donald Adams selection. You will have made habitual the fast comprehension, the quick and self-assured understanding of main ideas, which characterizes the efficient reader.

But you won't stop there.

Through a clear understanding of the *visual* process of reading and by increasing the speed and accuracy of your visual perception, you will begin to increase the potential rate you have just discovered. By methodical work in vocabulary building, by learning to sharpen and stimulate your intellectual curiosity, by constantly challenging your understanding, by learning to read books of greater and greater difficulty, by developing habits of active thinking, you will also increase immeasurably the keenness and accuracy and depth of your understanding.

That's the goal, those are the means of achieving the goal, and the hard work is directly ahead.

### *Review Test*

#### *What Have You Learned About Reading?*

*Take this true-false test:*

1. A skillful reader is generally more interested in main points than in subordinate details. TRUE? FALSE?
2. Self-training in rapid and efficient reading is hard work. TRUE? FALSE?
3. Rapid readers usually have poor comprehension. TRUE? FALSE?
4. The average person reads 25 to 50 per cent slower than he is capable of reading. TRUE? FALSE?
5. The average speed of the untrained adult is about the same as the normal speed of sixth- and seventh-grade elementary school pupils. TRUE? FALSE?
6. Slow reading may be caused by lazy mental habits. TRUE? FALSE?
7. You can become a better reader by reading simple, easy-to-understand material. TRUE? FALSE?
8. Unnecessarily slow reading may impede complete concentration. TRUE? FALSE?

9. Faster reading is produced by faster and keener comprehension.

TRUE? FALSE?

To check your answers, reverse the book.

Key: 1—T, 2—T, 3—F, 4—T, 5—T, 6—T, 7—F, 8—T, 9—T.

## CHAPTER II

# An Analysis of Your Present Reading Habits

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### *Preview*

*You will learn:*

- The distinguishing characteristics of efficient reading.
- What specific visual and motor habits make a reader inefficient.
- Whether you vocalize while reading.
- How many fixations you average to a line of print.
- Whether your eye spans are as long as they should be.
- Whether you regress.
- Whether you lip-read.
- How the eyes move during the reading process.

CHAPTER II WILL BE DEVOTED TO AN EXPLANATION OF THE PHYSIOLOGY OF THE READING ACT AND TO ANALYZING YOUR PERSONAL READING HABITS.



## *What Do You Know About Reading?*

*Take this true-false test:*

→1. A good reader is always conscious of the words he reads.

TRUE? FALSE?

→2. An efficient reader often rereads words or phrases in order to make sure he has understood them correctly.

TRUE? FALSE?

→3. The size of your vocabulary has no effect on your reading skill.

TRUE? FALSE?

→4. Skillful readers often move their lips while reading.

TRUE? FALSE?

→5. A good reader moves his eyes eight to ten times over the average line of print.

TRUE? FALSE?

To check your answers, reverse the book.

All the statements are false; reasons will be found in the pages which follow.

## 1. Are You a Skillful Reader?

### An Invitation to You to Make a Self-Diagnosis

The distinction between a poor reader and a good one is so definite and clear cut that we can graphically chart the differences in two contrasting columns. Think of your own reading habits as you examine the chart. In which column below do you most frequently see yourself mirrored? Take a pencil and check off your characteristics as you meet them.

THE POOR READER	THE EFFICIENT READER
Reads slowly, generally about 150 to 200 words per minute. Check here if you think this applies to you. <input type="checkbox"/>	Reads at least 400 to 500 words per minute. Check here if you think this applies to you. <input type="checkbox"/>
Comprehends slowly and inadequately—fails completely to get many of the salient facts. <input type="checkbox"/>	Comprehends instantaneously and accurately—loses nothing of importance. <input type="checkbox"/>
Makes many regressions—that is, must frequently reread words and phrases to gain complete understanding of them. <input type="checkbox"/>	Has few if any regressions—immediately grasps the full meaning of a word or phrase at first sight. <input type="checkbox"/>
Reads word by word or, in extreme cases, syllable by syllable. <input type="checkbox"/>	Reads for ideas, is rarely conscious of individual words. <input type="checkbox"/>

Must move his eyes six or seven times or more in order to cover the average line of print. <input type="checkbox"/>	Can absorb an average line of print with two or three eye movements. <input type="checkbox"/>
Reads with his eyes, his lips, his tongue, his throat, his vocal chords. <input type="checkbox"/>	Reads only with his eyes and mind. <input type="checkbox"/>
Reads "passively"—is devoted only to the task of word assimilation. <input type="checkbox"/>	Reads "actively"—thinks along with the author, interprets, sees pictures, draws his own analogies, agrees or disagrees constantly. <input type="checkbox"/>
Hears (in his "inner ear") the words he is reading. <input type="checkbox"/>	Is conscious only of rapid-moving <i>thoughts</i> . <input type="checkbox"/>
Concentrates imperfectly—is much aware of external noises, sights, happenings. <input type="checkbox"/>	Concentrates perfectly and with intense absorption. <input type="checkbox"/>
Carefully covers every single syllable of every word on a page of print. <input type="checkbox"/>	Skims the unimportant words and ideas. <input type="checkbox"/>
Fatigues easily because reading is a painful and often puzzling process. A dozen pages, a half-hour, are about all he can stand at one time. <input type="checkbox"/>	Is practically indefatigable; can—and often does—read a complete book at a single sitting. <input type="checkbox"/>

THE POOR READER	THE EFFICIENT READER
Retains only a small fraction of what he has read.	Remembers, sometimes all his life, the flavor, the emotional impact, the striking thoughts of what he reads.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

What has brought the poor reader to his sorry state? How account for the effortless skill of the efficient reader? Part (but only part) of the answer to these questions can be given in the phrase "perception speed." The poor reader has built up and thoroughly refined a set of incorrect eye habits, and by continuous practice and repetition has developed these habits to the point where they impede fast, efficient, meaningful reading.

But perception is, keep in mind, only part of the answer.

An equally important part of the answer can be given in the phrase "intellectual habits."

The poor reader is often *overconscientious*, to use the term in a special sense. He meticulously and methodically reads every word in a selection, giving equal weight and time to *all* words, to every single word, no matter how relatively unimportant, instead of using words as a means of grasping the author's main ideas.

The poor reader doesn't quite trust the adequacy of his comprehension. He reads meticulously, digesting and redigesting every sentence, every paragraph, as if it were the revealed word of God. Paradoxically enough, not only his speed suffers as a result of such extreme care, but his comprehension also, for he gets so involved in details and relatively unimportant minor points that he often misses the main theme of the writing. He is an excellent example of the man who can't see the forest because of the thickness of the trees. If he is reading a book, he practically memorizes paragraph by paragraph, but fails to get the over-all ideas and implications of the chapter. In short, the poor reader strives too hard to be perfect in his grasp of every word, every phrase, every detail, instead of pushing through swiftly to follow the basic concepts.

Therefore, he often regresses. Having no confidence in his comprehension, he goes back to check on figures, minor points, statistics, bits of description whose only purpose is to lend atmosphere—and the regressions cut his train of thought, make him

overconscious of words, ruin his concentration, break the smoothness of his absorption of ideas, and, of course, wreck his speed. He has never trained himself to plow straight ahead as fast as his understanding makes potentially possible. He has simply never learned to develop the habit of moving along rapidly.

In addition, there are certain other factors.

The skillful reader has so large a vocabulary that the words he meets are quick conveyors of thoughts. The vocabulary of the poor reader is so limited that many of the words he encounters represent a mystery to be puzzled out before ideas can be grasped and appreciated. Too often the mysteries never are solved; hence the ideas never are appreciated.

The skillful reader has already read so much that he can constantly compare and contrast his present reading with his previous literary experiences; he has a background on which to build. The poor reader too often has to approach every little bit of reading as a new and unrelated experience.

The efficient reader is imbued with intellectual curiosity; and all the reading he does helps in some measure to satisfy that curiosity. The poor reader has had to see his intellectual curiosity grow gradually blunted because reading has never been a sufficiently comfortable or rapid process to make the satisfaction of his curiosity worth the effort.

If you suspect that you are not normally as efficient, as rapid, as responsive a reader as you would like to be, let me tell you this—without qualification. The good habits needed for fast and skillful reading can be developed by self-training in a comparatively short time. You can train the speed and accuracy of your visual perception; you can develop the type of intellectual habits that will increase your rate of reading; you can learn to eliminate regressions, to cut down on "inner speech," to avoid poky attention to minor details—you can, with the proper practice and guidance, learn to plow ahead, speedily absorbing the main ideas, getting the over-all picture. You can start building your vocabulary and stimulating your intellectual curiosity. *And as a result, you will, in all likelihood, make tremendous gains in speed.* Not the kind of forced gain you discovered from your work in the previous chapter, but a permanent, comfortable, habitual gain that will change your entire attitude to reading.

You can do all this if you actively will it instead of merely *wishing* for it. What is the difference between willing and wish-

ing in learning? To quote from a wonderful book, *Streamline Your Mind*, by James L. Mursell, Professor of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University (J. B. Lippincott Co.):

The *wish* to learn is diffuse and general. The *will* to learn is concentrated and specific. The wish to learn means that we repeat a thing again and again hoping for something to happen. The will to learn means that we dig down and analyze, that we try to find out exactly what is wrong and exactly how to put it right. Let us take an analogy. A man may have a wish for better physical health and strength. His wish for health becomes a will to health only when he finds out what he must do to become more healthy, and then does it. So the will to learn means an intelligent and persistent search for the conditions of improvement and an intelligent and persistent concentration upon them.

Canny words, those, and important words—words which should condition your entire attitude toward increasing your reading skill. The rest of this book is devoted, in truth, to that very analysis and “intelligent and persistent search for the conditions of improvement” of which Dr. Mursell speaks.

## 2. The Physical Basis of Reading

Thus far we have spoken a good deal about poor reading and good reading without any direct or detailed scrutiny of the physical factors concerned in the reading process. As a *process*, reading is of course intellectual; but since the foundation of the *act* of reading is physical—in that it involves the use and movements of the eyes—I’d like you to become familiar with the physical act of reading, and especially with the functioning of the eyes in transmitting visual images to your brain.

During the reading act, there is a continuous alternation of fixations and interfixation movements.

“Fixation” is the technical term for the fractional second of focusing on a portion of a line of print. During a fixation the external movement of the eyes stops, an image is transmitted to the brain, and words are read. Then the eyes move slightly to the right, a new point of focus or fixation is made, and another image is flashed to the brain.

In order to keep reading, the eyes must move; but *while read-*

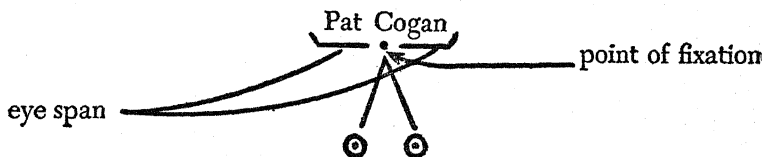
ing, the eyes are externally motionless. During the movement between two fixations ("interfixation movements"), visual acuity is markedly diminished, but the reader has no consciousness of loss of visual sharpness because he relies on his afterimage between fixations. (Much more will be said about the afterimage in a later chapter.<sup>1</sup>) It is only when the eyes pause between movements that words are read.

The constant alternation between fixations and interfixations is so rapid that eye movements during reading are measurable in hundredths of a second; and because these movements are so slight and so fast, the reader has no direct consciousness of them as he covers a page of print.

Let us examine the process more closely. A reader is confronted with a page of print. He starts to read the first line:

Pat Cogan, a friend of ours with the Red Cross in North Africa

To begin reading, his eyes fixate at a point somewhere at the beginning of the line and remain there, if he is the average reader, for about three twenty-fifths of a second. If we attempted to diagram the action, it would look something like this:



Having absorbed the first two words by fixating between them, the eyes then travel to the right and make a second point of fixation, then a third, a fourth, and so on until the end of the line is reached. Then they make a return sweep to the following line and start fixating all over again. For example:

Pat Cogan, a friend of ours with the Red Cross in North Africa,  
relays this revealing story: an important midnight telephone  
conference was being held at General Eisenhower's headquar-  
ters.

<sup>1</sup> See page 55.

This pattern shows the unconscious eye movements of a reader of average efficiency: a type line about four inches long (the size used in this book) is absorbed in four or five fixations. A highly skilled reader might cover such a line in three fixations. A poor reader, on the other hand, would require six to nine fixations, or even more.

Now, oddly enough, the process of making fixations and of moving the eyes is so rapid, so reflexive, so unconscious that you might read eight hours a day and never realize what your eyes are doing. And this is exactly as it should be. You are not supposed to feel your eyes fixating and moving. The more aware you are of these movements, the less skillfully you are reading. Nevertheless, the movements go on—for without them, no reading could be done.

If eye movements were a conscious process, a reader would naturally tend to be guided more than is healthy by the punctuation and by the physical character of a line of type. This is the main point: the more you realize what your eyes are doing, the less skillfully you are reading. Conversely, the more you *imagine* that your eyes are stationary, the greater is your reading skill. It will be established later, and reiterated many times, that the skillful reader is aware of only one thing: absorption of ideas.

The fundamental character of eye movements is jerky, although the all-over effect is smooth and flowing. You will better understand this seeming inconsistency when, in section 3, you take the opportunity to observe a reader's eyes in a mirror.

Let us now contrast the reading patterns of the efficient and the inefficient reader.

*The efficient reader:*

The young soldier at the switchboard was working his head off  
with calls all over North Africa. The G.I. had a slight fever,  
but he didn't want to tell anybody about it. Finally, though, a  
lull came in the conference and his captain ordered him to lie  
down for a while. About an hour later, he awoke from his doze



*The inefficient reader:*

and heard the switchboard going full-blast. Wondering who  
could have possibly replaced him at 2 A.M., he went back  
to his board, found Eisenhower running the switchboard for  
his own conference.

By being able to cover a book-length line of type at an average of three fixations to a line, with three to four medium-sized words to each eye span, the efficient reader not only saves time; he also works less hard and has fewer periods of nonreading. The skillful reader does not take any longer to absorb three or four words than the poor reader needs for a single word. The former's fixations are certainly no longer in duration than the latter's, and generally are much shorter.

The poor reader, whose patterns are illustrated above, is the word-by-word reader. The reason his eye spans take in only a single word at a time is no fault of his vision: word-by-word reading is simply a habit he has perfected through constant practice. As a result, the meaning of the page comes to him choppily, and thinking is made difficult, for normal thought does not occur by words, but by phrases and pictures. A picture is much more quickly drawn in the mind by several combined words than by individual ones.

The pattern we have just been studying does not by any means represent the worst possible reader. Many poor readers have such short eye spans that they cannot even take in a whole word at one fixation. Such undisciplined readers may even go so far as to attack a line of type syllable by syllable, or even letter by letter. An *extremely* inefficient reader's patterns would look like this:

Pat C oga n, a fr iend of our s with

After a gargantuan struggle, he has managed to complete only half a line in seven fixations, and so erratic are his eye spans that all he has achieved for his toil and trouble is a series of meaningless syllables:

## PATC OGA NAFR IEND OF OUR SWITH

The only words that make sense are "of" and "our," and at that one of them is a misreading of thought ("our" instead of "ours"). So that half line means nothing to him. He goes back, for there is no point in going on. On a second reading, the words line up better and manage to communicate something to his mind; but he is not reading. He is solving something that approaches a Chinese puzzle.

Few readers, admittedly, are so poor as the one just discussed. However, this is the point: the futile reading of the extremely unskillful reader is merely a reduction to absurdity of the habits which afflict the moderately inefficient reader—habits which can get worse as time goes on, and certainly never get any better.

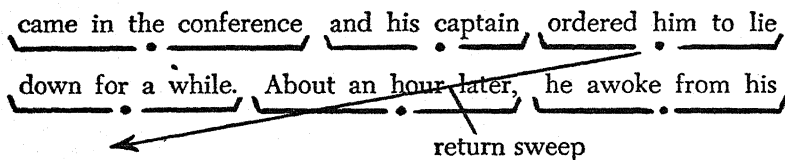
Two words to remember, then, are "fixation" and "eye span."

1. *Fixation*—the moment at which the eyes are focused on a point on a page, and words are mentally absorbed.

2. *Eye span*—that part of a line of type which is read during the fixation.

These terms cover the major activities in the reading act, but two other factors are also important:

1. At the end of each line the reader's eyes swing back to begin the new line. This swing is called the "return sweep."



2. Because of numerous fixations, short eye spans, limited vocabulary, and distrust of his comprehension, the poor reader, as we have seen, frequently regresses.

So that you may become thoroughly familiar with the mechanics of the reading act, it will be interesting and profitable for you to do two things:

1. Observe someone's eye movements while he is reading.

2. Have someone check on your own eye movements to discover both the number of fixations you now make and whether you are guilty of that cardinal sin of poor reading: regressions.

Your addiction to lip movements and vocalization will also be tested.

These activities will be our immediate concern in section 3.

### 3. An Analysis of Your Personal Reading Habits

You must cajole some unwary soul into assisting you in an investigation that will make it possible for you to learn the patterns of your own eye movements. You will also need a small hand mirror.

First you are to observe through the mirror your assistant's eye movements, so that you will have in your mind the clearest possible picture of what eye movements are.

Your assistant is to sit at a desk holding this book up at a slight angle, while you stand at his side. Holding the mirror in your hand, adjust it so that you can clearly and comfortably see his eyes in it. Make sure that the pupils of his eyes are visible in the mirror. If only his eyelids and lashes can be seen, either the mirror or the book is in the wrong position. Make the necessary adjustments and then ask him to read the following selection. As he reads, watch closely to detect the short, slight, jerky movements of the pupils of his eyes.

#### CHEER UP <sup>2</sup>

Here are two complaints about etiquette that will interest every parent. And Emily Post *can't* answer them. Read them to the end and you'll see why.

I. "Our earth is degenerate in these latter days. There are signs that the world is coming to an end. Children no longer obey their parents. Everybody wants to write a book. The end of the world is near."

II. "The children now love luxury, they have bad manners, contempt for authority, they show disrespect for elders, and love chatter in place of exercise. Children are now tyrants, not the servants of their households. They no longer rise when elders enter the room. They contradict their parents, chatter before com-

<sup>2</sup> From *This Week* magazine, copyright 1943 by the United Newspapers Magazine Corporation.

pany, gobble up dainties at the table, cross their legs, and tyrannize over their teachers."

The first complaint was written by a discouraged Egyptian priest in 4000 B. C. Greek Philosopher Socrates registered the other one over 2,000 years ago. We parents might as well resign ourselves.

It may take you a few minutes to realize that your assistant's eyes do actually move. With careful observation you will soon be able to follow the movements so closely that it will be quite easy to count the number of fixations your assistant makes on each line. Especially conspicuous will be the wide return sweeps; and if your assistant is by chance not a topnotch reader, you may be lucky enough to be able to see what a regression looks like. If necessary, let your assistant reread the selection several times until you feel expert in noting the movements and counting the fixations.

Now that you have seen eye movements at first hand, you are ready to be observed in your turn and have your fixations counted. Change places with your assistant, so that you are now the reader and he is the observer. Explain what he is to look for and then breeze through this interesting excerpt from the *Reader's Digest* while he watches and learns to note your movements.

### TRIANGLE AT THE ZOO <sup>3</sup>

by William Bridges

The crested Sumatran hornbills in the New York Zoological Park were perfectly mated and ideally happy. For blissful hours they sat side by side on the perch, and at feeding time the male often picked out tidbits and presented them to his spouse. Their devotedness was an object lesson and an inspiration to young married couples who visited the Zoo.

Then, one day, a newcomer came into the picture—a concave-casqued hornbill from India, which the Curator of Birds installed in an empty cage next to that of the Sumatran pair.

Immediately, the Indian, a young and lusty male, began looking over at the female next door and giving her the old eye in

<sup>3</sup> From *Reader's Digest*. Reprinted by special permission of Mr. Bridges and *Reader's Digest*.

a sly sort of way. She didn't resent it, and as time went on she sat closer and closer to the wire screen between the cages.

One afternoon at feeding time the Indian picked a juicy grape out of his tray and shoved it through the screen. The female took it and ogled her suitor with all the coy surprise of a matron who has been presented with a pearl necklace by a gentleman friend.

A second later she was flat on the floor of the cage; over her stood her mate, with flailing wings and stabbing beak. The grape flew out of her mouth. She made no resistance, and finally her spouse backed off and stood looking at her. She got on her feet, retrieved the grape—and then did a feminine thing: she offered it to her mate.

And he, with one sardonic eye on the Indian hornbill, ate it.

Now that your observer is warmed up, he is to watch very closely and with rapt attention when you read the selection below so that he can follow the instructions correctly. A pencil and paper should be handy, so that he may jot down his answers to the questions that occur.

#### *Instructions for the observer:*

1. In paragraph 1, do you note any regressions? If so, how many?
2. In paragraph 2 practice counting the number of fixations which the reader makes on each line, so that your count for paragraphs 3, 4, and 5 will be accurate.
3. In paragraphs 3, 4, and 5, what is the total number of fixations made? Count each brief movement and continue counting successively until the reader has completed the selection.

#### NATURE OF READING <sup>4</sup>

1. The eye moves across a printed line and you read. The eye is a very special sense organ because it is a direct extension of the brain. Consequently reading is almost a direct mental process. The eye, however, does not read while it moves. Decades ago physiologists learned that the eye sees only when it stops.

<sup>4</sup> From *The Air University Reading Improvement Program*, The Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, Alabama, June 1948. Reprinted with permission.

(Announce to your observer that you are starting on paragraph 2.)

2. Reading, therefore, consists of a series of fixations which the eye makes while viewing a printed line. During these fixation pauses, the material viewed is translated into meanings by the brain. A good reader will make three to four fixations for an ordinary line of print; the poor reader eight to twelve or more. Ability to cover a wider span, to view a large field, is directly related to reading ability. The span is also related to speed of reading, since the eye travels about 6 percent of the time between fixations and spends about 94 percent of the time on the fixation pauses.

(Announce to your observer that you are starting on paragraph 3.)

3. The good reader is also able to spend a shorter time on each fixation. He will stop only about a fifth of a second on each fixation; the poor reader will take twice as long.

4. Finally, the good reader makes fewer regressions per line or, in other words, his eye travels back over material less frequently. As a result, the rapid reader is able to read continuously and thus follow the meaning of the writer more easily.

5. To improve reading ability, it is necessary to have training to develop these characteristics: (1) a wide recognition span, (2) few fixation pauses per line, (3) short fixation pauses, and (4) few regressions.

Now for a summary of the results of the investigation. With your assistant's help, fill in this record:

1. NUMBER OF REGRESSIONS IN THE FIRST PARAGRAPH  
(IF NONE, WRITE "NONE"). \_\_\_\_\_
2. TOTAL NUMBER OF FIXATIONS MADE IN PARAGRAPHS  
3, 4, AND 5. \_\_\_\_\_
3. AVERAGE NUMBER OF FIXATIONS PER LINE IN PARAGRAPHS 3, 4, AND 5 (DIVIDE TOTAL NUMBER BY 11). \_\_\_\_\_

To complete your analysis, you are to read another selection from *The Air University Reading Improvement Program*. Your observer will take a position facing you, so that he can clearly see whether or not you move your lips while you read.

## THE TACHISTOSCOPE <sup>5</sup>

The use of the tachistoscope in rapid recognition was developed by Dr. Samuel Renshaw at The Ohio State University. When the armed services realized the need for speed-up training in aircraft recognition, Army and Navy pilots used the tachistoscope with outstandingly successful results. Dr. Renshaw is one of our most prominent leaders in experimentation with visual problems and has tested the tachistoscope widely for reading benefits. His students are now extending these studies.

The tachistoscope helps the reader approach his limit of precision of vision and peripheral span. The untrained eye has a limited field of vision but with training on quick recognition this field of functional recognition expands.

The tachistoscope has other values. It provides training in several visual processes simultaneously. Not only does it increase the eye span, it also decreases the length of eye fixation. The shutter of the flash-meter can be controlled so that an interval as short as  $\frac{1}{100}$  of a second can be obtained. For purposes of training in the Reading Laboratory  $\frac{1}{100}$  second gives enough speed to provide practice in quickening the eye fixation, since the shortest recorded fixation during reading is several times as long as  $\frac{1}{100}$  second.

Another value of the tachistoscope is that it forces the reader to grasp material as a form-field, seen as a whole. With such a quick flash he cannot vocalize or get side-tracked on elements of the visual pattern; he must take it in at once or it is gone as soon as the after-image fades.

Tachistoscopic training starts in the Reading Laboratory as soon as the officer has been pre-tested. He starts with practice on a set of 25 five-digit slides, flashing each slide at  $\frac{1}{10}$  or  $\frac{1}{25}$  of a second. These slides take him about 25 minutes. He keeps a daily work record form on which he records what he sees for each slide and on which he records the correct digits for each error he makes. Data on this sheet are transferred to a permanent record; both are kept in an individual folder.

Progress on the tachistoscopic training occurs in three stages:  
(1) ability to see part of the digit sequence, usually the first part;  
(2) ability to see the form of the sequence, getting all digits but

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* Reprinted with permission.

with reversals in order; and (3) ability to see the content of the sequence, getting all digits and getting them in the right order.

4. WAS THERE THE SLIGHTEST INDICATION OF LIP  
MOVEMENTS? (ANSWER "YES" OR "NO.") \_\_\_\_\_

Finally, to complete your understanding of your visual and motor responses during the reading act, ask your assistant to hold his fingers gently on the center of your neck just below your adam's apple. As you read the next selection, notice whether you feel any movements in your throat and instruct your assistant to determine whether he detects any motions or vibrations in your vocal cords. If all is quiet, as far as you and he can discover, the likelihood is that your silent reading is not accompanied by gross vocalization. Many people tend to subvocalize without making any perceptible contractions of their vocal cords. Subvocalization, however, is a symptom that will eventually disappear with increased efficiency and speed of comprehension—no direct attempt need be made to eliminate the habit.

#### VOLUNTEER GROUP <sup>6</sup>

Of the original volunteer group which took reading training in the Reading Laboratory of the Air Command and Staff School, 28 attended frequently enough to be considered in attendance for a period of six weeks. Voluntary classes in the evening hours did not prove successful and most of those who had signed up for these hours dropped out of the class after two weeks.

This group started at an average reading rate of 272 words per minute. The slowest reader's rate was 150 words per minute; the fastest, 470. At the end of the training period the average for the group rose to 530.5 words per minute. The slowest reader's speed was 185 words per minute; the fastest, 750.

. . . . .

Of the 28 officers, all but one made significant gains in speed during the six-week period. This officer made a gain of only 4 per cent (from 186 words per minute to 194 words per minute). However, since the 194-word rate was at a comprehension level of 90 per cent on the last progress test, he probably could have

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* Reprinted with permission.



read faster without falling below the criterion comprehension level of 70 per cent. Interview with this officer indicated that he felt he had made satisfactory progress but needed a longer period to make greater gain.

In the preliminary classroom instruction to these officers, the statement was made, on the basis of previous studies with college and adult groups, that reading rate could be increased 50 percent without undue comprehension loss, with a six-week program limited to three periods per week. The actual average gain with this group was 95 per cent.

The gain, however, was not uniform for all students. Seven officers made less than the expected 50 percent gain, with two making small gains. Of the remaining 21 officers, three made gains up to 60 percent, seven up to 100 percent, six up to 150 percent and five above 150 percent. Two officers of the group attained a gain of 184 percent.

5. WAS THERE ANY INDICATION OF THROAT MOVEMENTS OR VOCAL-CORD VIBRATIONS? (ANSWER "YES" OR "NO.")

So now you know how you stand. The analysis is made, the picture has been drawn.

You know the average number of times you move your eyes in order to absorb a line of print; you know whether you regress, whether you use your lips when you read, and whether or not you vocalize.

You know the rate of your normal and potential reading speed, the accuracy of your comprehension, the efficiency with which you can brush aside unimportant details and get to the heart of a passage.

Your next interest is in strengthening the good qualities you have discovered in your reading habits, and in eliminating the bad ones.

Succeeding chapters of the book will provide exercises and drills toward that end.

## Review Test

### What Have You Learned About Reading?

Take this true-false test:

1. Incorrect visual responses are the entire cause of poor reading habits. TRUE? FALSE?
2. A skillful reader is always aware of his eyes when he reads. TRUE? FALSE?
3. Skillful readers often move their lips while reading. TRUE? FALSE?
4. The faster the normal reading rate, the keener the comprehension is likely to be. TRUE? FALSE?
5. Regressors do not trust the adequacy of their comprehension. TRUE? FALSE?
6. If you pay careful attention to the details of material, the main ideas will take care of themselves. TRUE? FALSE?
7. A skillful reader consciously directs his eye movements. TRUE? FALSE?
8. Eye movements are jerky in nature. TRUE? FALSE?
9. A good reader moves his eyes eight to ten times over the average line of print. TRUE? FALSE?
10. Good readers read one word at a time. TRUE? FALSE?
11. A limited vocabulary may be a cause of frequent regressions. TRUE? FALSE?
12. Building your reading vocabulary will increase the efficiency of your reading. TRUE? FALSE?

To check your answers, reverse the book.

Key: 1—F, 2—F, 3—F, 4—T, 5—T, 6—F, 7—F, 8—T, 9—F, 10—F, 11—T, 12—T.

## CHAPTER III

# Training in Instantaneous Perception

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### *Preview*

*You will learn:*

- How to do valuable and stimulating exercises in rapid visual perception of three- to seven-digit numbers.
- What perception training is, and how it can accelerate your reading.
- The rules for using the "Flashmeter card" to increase your perception speed and improve your peripheral vision.

IN CHAPTER III YOU WILL START YOUR TRAINING  
IN DIGIT PERCEPTION.

*Note:* Do not plan to cover the next two chapters (III and IV) at one sitting each, and do not attempt to finish these chapters before continuing with the rest of the book.

The most workable plan will be to read pages 47-55 of chapter III, then take a three- to four-minute training session with the Flashmeter card on whatever digit exercise your present skill requires. After your period of digit-preception training, proceed to chapter IV, read pages 85-88, spend three to four minutes on word perception or phrase perception beginning on page 89, then skip to chapter V.

Plan to continue your digit- and phrase-perception training for a period of seven to nine minutes *daily*, in combination with your work in chapters V through XI.

## 1. One Key to Rapid Reading

Actual reading, you recall, is done during the fractional seconds in which the eyes fixate. The efficient reader absorbs a number of words at a single fixation: his unit of absorption is a complete phrase, a thought sequence. The inefficient reader absorbs single words, one at a time; or, if his reading is very poor, parts of words, individual syllables.

Thus, to cover a line of print such as is used in this book, a highly skilled reader might make three fixations. After coming to rest at the first point on a new line, his eyes need move only twice more before he is ready to make a return sweep to the beginning of the next line. After that first fixation, then, there are only two moments of nonfocusing, only two fractional seconds in which his eyes are not reading. The unskilled reader, on the other hand, may have to move his eyes five or six or more times before he has read the whole line: there is a correspondingly greater number of moments of nonreading. This extra time allotted by the poor reader to nonreading accounts in part for his slowness.

But only in part.

Suppose there are two boxes in front of you, both nailed to the top of a table. Box A contains a thousand marbles. Box B is empty. It is your job to transfer the marbles from one box to the other. How would you do it?

You could, if you liked, pick up the marbles one by one, dropping each into the second box before you picked up another from the first one. That would take a long time. The muscles in your arm and hand would become tired long before you finished. You would be doing your task in as inefficient a way as possible.

Or you could pick up the marbles two at a time. That would double your speed. But to do the job as quickly and as efficiently as possible, you would grab up handful after handful. The more you grabbed each time, the sooner you'd be through, and the less you would be likely to tire.

This analogy is admirably applicable to reading. If your eyes

pick up only one or two words at a time, the process must perforce be a slow and painful one. However, if your eyes grab up "handfuls" of words, you can read like the wind. *The more words you absorb in a single fixation, the faster you read.* That is the second part of the reason that increased efficiency in perception can so radically speed up your reading.

There is a third, and very significant, factor.

Reading is not actually done with the eyes, of course; reading is a mental activity. It is done with the mind—the eyes acting as sensory extensions of the brain, as a transmitting belt carrying images of words to the brain.

If your eyes feed your mind one word at a time, you grasp the thought of a printed page choppily, disconnectedly; for thought normally comes in phrases, not in single words. There is practically no meaning at all in the single word *one*. There is very little thought in the single word *bright*. The word *morning*, although it has a fuller significance by itself than either *one* or *bright*, contains a good deal less meaning than the complete phrase, *one bright morning*.

The word-by-word reader forces his mind to slow up because his eyes are continually feeding it words that are devoid, or nearly devoid, of meaning. His mind receives the impulse *one*—and must wait patiently for the second impulse, *bright*—and must wait still again for the third impulse, *morning*—before it has something definite to work on.

The eyes of the efficient reader feed his mind, in a *single* impulse, a complete thought, *one bright morning*. No dead spots. No waiting. No interruption to the process of thinking. Most important, no waste of time—for the idea, *one bright morning*, can be absorbed by the eyes and registered in the mind *more quickly* than can the separate words that make up that thought.

*In reading, the whole is more significant than the sum of its parts.* The "whole" is an idea, a thought; the parts are individual words which, by themselves, one by one, are often useless for comprehension.

The third factor, then, is that the reader who takes in *more* words in a single fixation understands more quickly; and, since the final purpose of reading is to understand, the more instantaneously the thought of a printed line is grasped, and the more smoothly the mind and eyes cooperate, the more rapid and efficient the entire process becomes.

*One key to rapid reading is the absorption by the eyes of large numbers of words at each fixation.*

Merely knowing this fact is not enough.

Expert as you may become at understanding the principles of rapid, efficient reading, you cannot become a fast reader until you are able, as a result of constant, hard practice, to apply these principles as a matter of automatic habit. You can say to yourself, "I am now going to use wide fixations; I am going to perceive quickly and accurately; and thus I am going to read faster," but you will have as little success as the person who has memorized the principles of expert swimming and then jumps into the water for a half-mile race. If he has never been in the water before, he will likely sink almost immediately, for his knowledge of the rules *intellectually* would not, by itself, make his body respond *physically*.

The person who intends to become an expert swimmer must practice one skill after another until the correct bodily movements become habitual and automatic; he must build up such an excellent set of coordinating reflexive habits from his body does the proper things without any conscious direction from his mind. In first learning how to swim, he must go through each part of the act consciously. Then, by practice, by more and more and more practice, by constantly and patiently refining his good habits and by ruthlessly weeding out his bad ones, he trains his body to function by itself.

Becoming a fast reader requires the same continuous, intelligent practice, the same single-minded diligence that are essential to the conquest of any high-order skill; it requires the building up and refinement of good habits to the point where instantaneous perception and wide fixations; lack of vocalization, regressions, and lip movements; and rapid mental reaction to the *ideas* on the printed page become so nearly automatic that the mind can be left entirely free to concentrate on reacting to what an author is saying.

You are now going to start practicing and refining the numerous and complex skills that are essential to rapid reading.

If you do all the exercises in these pages, if you do them honestly and patiently and tenaciously, your reading cannot help but become more rapid, your comprehension cannot help but become more accurate; for it is this practice that will begin to make the proper habits reflexive. I do not promise you that by the end

of such practice and work you will be a skillful and whirlwind reader. Don't expect that. But do expect this: at the end of a period of conscientious practice, you will have *begun* to eliminate bad habits and to build up good ones, and your speed will have *begun* to increase. And the beginning is the most important part. Then, if you frequently return to these pages to practice more and more, if you continue this conscious practice daily, or as nearly daily as the circumstances of your life permit, the proper habits will eventually become deep seated, and finally reflexive. Then—and only then—will you be a rapid and skillful reader.

## 2. Introduction to Perception Training

I am going to ask you now to do a very simple but, as you will shortly agree, very valuable, exercise—attempt to see numbers in one quick, split-second glance.

I am going to ask you to train yourself in digit perception—to give yourself the sort of training which, in combination with controlled speed, produces the spectacular results we have already discussed.

Such exercising and practice are usually called “tachistoscopic (ta-kiss-to-SKOP-ik) training,” after the device known as a “tachistoscope” (ta-KISS-to-skoap), which flashes digits and phrases on a screen at exposures varying from one full second down to as low as  $\frac{1}{100}$  of a second.

An improved form of the tachistoscope, manufactured by the Keystone View Co., of Meadville, Pennsylvania, consists of a lantern and a Flashmeter.<sup>1</sup> The lantern provides enough light to project the material on the screen, and the Flashmeter, working on a spring principle, limits the exposure to the fraction of a second determined by the operator. The Keystone tachistoscope is used throughout the country in elementary and high schools, and in the reading clinics of colleges and universities, to provide the kind of training in quick perception that is so valuable in increasing rate of reading. In a supplement to the Keystone Tachistoscope Manual, William B. Greet and John H. Eargle of the Keystone School and Guidance Center, San Antonio, Texas, explain the principle behind such training as follows:

<sup>1</sup> This is the registered trade name of the Keystone View Co.



I. Since we use but a fraction of our capacities, according to research psychologists, and since approximately 80 per cent of our knowledge comes to us through our eyes, increasing usable vision and broadening spans of perception and recognition . . . [has as its purpose to] increase speed, comprehension, accuracy, and self-confidence in reading, sight reading of music, working with figures, and in fact any activity that involves the use of the eyes.

II. By gradually increasing the speed of the flash and the amount of material to be perceived, unnecessary eye movements are eliminated and the spans of perception and recognition broadened. This technique drives vision impulses to lower reflex levels, where, as learning proceeds, the interval necessary between reception and interpretation is reduced.

The digit exercises that will be presented shortly are an adaptation of the Keystone slides, which I have made for home use and self-training. Be careful to follow directions carefully at all points in your training.

### 3. Determining Your Present Perception Skill

*Directions:* The material below is for practice in understanding the technique of working. Actual testing of perception begins on page 52, and you are cautioned not to notice any of the material on that page until you are sure you understand the directions thoroughly.

1. Place the Flashmeter card (which you will find between the pages of the book) in such a way that the digit window is just above the first number and the digit arrow squarely meets the arrow on the page.

13856      ← —————

2. Pull down the card just far enough to expose the number, *and immediately push the card back* so that the number is again hidden.

3. During the time the number is exposed, glance at it quickly. *Do not say the number to yourself.* Depend entirely on visual impression.

4. As soon as the number is concealed, attempt to reproduce it, *in writing*, in the blank to its right.

5. Then pull the card down a second time and check your answer.

6. Now repeat the process by exposing the next number. To do this pull the card down one line, exposing the number for a fraction of a second, and quickly cover it with an upward movement. Expose the numbers in the left-hand column before doing those in the right-hand column.

Such are the six steps to follow in the next exercise. Bear in mind that you expose the number for only a fraction of a second, that you do not attempt to vocalize what you have seen, that you reproduce it as accurately as you are able, and that you check your response after each exposure. Practice on the following six numbers before you start the perception test.

645	← _____	060	← _____
321	← _____	732	← _____
187	← _____	299	← _____

In the perception test which follows I will present numbers containing three, four, five, six, and seven digits, three of each. Using the Flashmeter card as directed, determine how many digits you can see accurately in a split-second fixation, so that you will know at what point to start your training. If you get nowhere with the three-digit numbers, start your training at that point (exercise D-3) on the following pages; if your skill breaks at four-digit perception, start your training with exercise D-4, and so on.

### *Perception Test*

Line up arrow on card with arrow on page before beginning.

138	← _____	5917	← _____
276	← _____	6401	← _____
892	← _____	58438	← _____
6724	← _____	29864	← _____

98716	← _____	4238901	← _____
907690	← _____	7381072	← _____
173986	← _____	6774436	← _____
286331	← _____		

NUMBER OF DIGITS PERCEIVED WITHOUT ERROR: 3 4 5 6 7  
(circle one)

#### 4. Instructions for Perception Training

You are ready now to begin your perception training with digits. If you are to derive maximum benefit from this training, it is most important that you understand the technique to follow and that you follow that technique carefully. Let me explain it step by step and so clearly that there will be no chance of error.

1. *Goal.* Your final aim is to increase your span of perception *by one or more digits*. If your skill failed at the four-digit number on the perception test, your minimum goal is to learn to perceive a series of four-digit numbers at rapid exposure and with 100 per cent accuracy, and from then on, by training, to increase your span, digit by digit, as far as you can go. Some adults, in self-training, can eventually achieve accurate, split-second perception of seven digits. Others hit a ceiling at five or six digits and, for a time at least, can make no further progress. Consider it an achievement of no mean value if you can increase your span *by even one digit*, but keep going methodically until you are sure you have reached your ceiling. Then stop training for several days or a week. When you start again you may find that the ceiling can be extended.

2. *Time to be spent in training.* Do not ever, under any circumstances, spend more than three or four minutes in one training session. Work up to the point where fatigue threatens to set in, but no more than three or four minutes.

In addition, attempt to practice *every day*, if at all possible, and certainly no less than five times a week. A practice session occasionally, whenever you happen to think of it, is a pure waste of time—there must be some regularity in your training. It is

suggested that you keep going daily, or almost daily, until you hit your ceiling. At that time a week's layoff is permissible.

3. *Total time for showing permanent results.* Anywhere from eight to twenty weeks of daily, or almost daily, practice sessions, with perhaps an occasional week for layoff, is the average time most adults require.

4. *Specific procedure in using the Flashmeter card.* Be careful not to look at the numbers on any page until you are ready to start training with the exercise on that page. Then align the arrow on the Flashmeter card with the arrow on the page, pull down the card until the digits are exposed in the window, and immediately push the card up again so the digits are once more hidden. Write your response in the space to the right of the number that has been exposed, then pull the card down to check your answer. Continue immediately, in the same fashion, with the next exposure.

5. *Timing.* The important element is to allow only enough time to make one fixation at each exposure. There is no need to rush the movement of the card, but you must expose and conceal quickly enough to permit only one fixation. As you become skillful, you will expose for less and less time, always considerably under a second.

6. *Where to fixate.* There is a broad black arrow pointing to the center of the digit window, and this point will be approximately in the middle of the space occupied by the digits. Fixate at that point, and you will be able to see a certain distance on each side. (This is called peripheral vision.)

7. *Partial reproduction.* As you get into the longer numbers, you will at first be able to reproduce only a certain portion of the digits. Don't let this phenomenon disturb you; accept it as a challenge and expect eventually, with further practice, to perceive a greater and greater proportion, until you will see the complete number in one fixation. That is the pattern of progress. Starting on six-digit numbers, you may at first see only the three central digits, or perhaps the first or the last three digits; with more practice, you'll perceive four, five, and finally all six. As soon as you can perceive all six, you're at the threshold of success.

8. *Reversals.* You may also note the phenomenon known as reversal. When you flash, for example, 632189, you may see all six digits but reproduce them as 623819—reversing the order of some of them. This, too, is a natural step in progress, an indica-

tion that you're approaching, but have not yet achieved, perfect accuracy. With further practice, reversals will gradually be eliminated.

9. *Afterimage*. Remember that you are training your *visual speed*, not your memory. Therefore, do not, under any circumstances, say or even *think* the numbers you see. Rely on the visual image you get, plus the afterimage.

The eye transmits the image to the brain, instantaneously, and for the merest fraction of a second that image will continue after the number has been hidden. It is this afterimage that will help you to reproduce the number in writing. (Hesitate for a fraction of a second, if necessary, before writing the number you have seen, so that there will be time for the afterimage to help you reproduce the digits accurately.) If you attempt to remember the number by any but visual means, you are getting no value from your training and are furthermore building up bad habits of subvocalization.

Perception exercises will be found on the following pages:

Three-digit perception starts on page 55.

Four-digit perception starts on page 57.

Five-digit perception starts on page 60.

Six-digit perception starts on page 67.

Seven-digit perception starts on page 76.

## 5. Perception Exercises

### *Exercise D-3*

#### (Three-Digit Perception)

Using the Flashmeter card, expose each number for a fraction of a second, getting a *visual* impression. Do not say the digits to yourself. Reproduce the number in the blank to the right and then check your result. You may have to train yourself to refrain from repeating, in your mind, what you see. Such training will be most helpful for digit perception of longer numbers and also for phrase perception in the next chapter. In addition, such solely visual reaction, once made habitual, will be of incalculable benefit in conquering vocalization, lip movements, and regressions, and in learning to absorb ideas at a rapid rate.

625	← _____	283	← _____
847	← _____	502	← _____
948	← _____	914	← _____
872	← _____	802	← _____
951	← _____	502	← _____
092	← _____	803	← _____
851	← _____	840	← _____
982	← _____	192	← _____
939	← _____	845	← _____
985	← _____	902	← _____
839	← _____	100	← _____
041	← _____	010	← _____
982	← _____	802	← _____
041	← _____	802	← _____
092	← _____	902	← _____
804	← _____	602	← _____
827	← _____	784	← _____
948	← _____	393	← _____
029	← _____	593	← _____
190	← _____	511	← _____
938	← _____	151	← _____
739	← _____		

## Exercise D-4

### (Four-Digit Perception)

Using the Flashmeter card, expose each number for a fraction of a second, getting a *visual* impression. Do not say the digits to yourself. Reproduce the number in the blank to the right and then check your result. You may have to train yourself to refrain from repeating, in your mind, what you see. Such training will be most helpful for digit perception of longer numbers and also for phrase perception in the next chapter. In addition, such solely visual reaction, once made habitual, will be of incalculable benefit in conquering vocalization, lip movements, and regressions, and in learning to absorb ideas at a rapid rate.

6234	← _____	4560	← _____
1876	← _____	6728	← _____
9845	← _____	0982	← _____
3472	← _____	1930	← _____
7850	← _____	9872	← _____
9075	← _____	9031	← _____
8793	← _____	9032	← _____
8675	← _____	0921	← _____
6432	← _____	9832	← _____
0946	← _____	9032	← _____
6472	← _____	8940	← _____
5321	← _____	7802	← _____
1560	← _____	3012	← _____
9081	← _____	9402	← _____

5793 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
8502 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
1592 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
0499 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
8492 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
0293 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9411 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9432 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9440 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9288 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
3820 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
6782 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9280 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9380 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
7277 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9288 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
0311 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9320 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9387 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
7356 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9278 ← \_\_\_\_\_

1125 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
4236 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
7283 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
7332 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
7392 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
5677 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
3281 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
3410 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
3002 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
4320 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9105 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
7692 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9401 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9872 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
8920 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9382 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9382 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
8940 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
6801 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
6234 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
7385 ← \_\_\_\_\_



7274 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
3561 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
2761 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9742 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
7829 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
2653 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
6171 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
3759 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
6547 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
4672 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
1534 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
7162 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
1739 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
4798 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
2698 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
2954 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9315 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
4386 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
5313 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
2745 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
8594 ← \_\_\_\_\_

7163 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
3562 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
7521 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
4561 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
3993 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
8317 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
3167 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
5232 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
4296 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9475 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
2196 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
2876 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
2198 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
4913 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
2396 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
2467 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
9246 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
8146 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
3186 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
5672 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
3175 ← \_\_\_\_\_

9124	← _____	1369	← _____
9352	← _____	8795	← _____
3645	← _____	4378	← _____
7561	← _____	5473	← _____
7653	← _____	8256	← _____
4876	← _____	3568	← _____
1234	← _____	7293	← _____
3127	← _____	9754	← _____
4281	← _____	1365	← _____

### *Preparatory Exercise D-5*

To help you prepare for training in five-digit perception, this exercise in "jumping digits" is presented. The span occupied by the following three- and four-digit numbers is equal to that occupied by five-digit numbers, but one or two digits are omitted in each instance. When you can do this exercise comfortably, you will be prepared for complete five-digit training.

7 2 8	← _____	40 7	← _____
1 9 0	← _____	7 2 8	← _____
8 6 4	← _____	63 1	← _____
32 6	← _____	2 19	← _____
98 1	← _____	5 0 9	← _____
9 18	← _____	32 6	← _____
5 76	← _____	9 1 3	← _____

32 7	← _____	386 1	← _____
4 1 2	← _____	764 0	← _____
3 7 1	← _____	534 8	← _____
88 0	← _____	579 1	← _____
1 56	← _____	62 31	← _____
7 3 9	← _____	7 207	← _____
11 4	← _____	329 1	← _____
3 1 2	← _____	5 047	← _____
77 2	← _____	23 69	← _____
3 0 5	← _____	02 39	← _____
329 1	← _____	562 4	← _____
7 386	← _____	9 153	← _____
9 542	← _____	21 07	← _____
06 65	← _____	3 927	← _____
43 45	← _____	1 057	← _____
6 553	← _____	89 97	← _____
53 96	← _____	1 690	← _____
23 63	← _____	624 3	← _____
76 00	← _____	0 359	← _____
43 66	← _____	70 10	← _____

## Exercise D-5

### (Five-Digit Perception)

Using the Flashmeter card, expose each number for a fraction of a second, getting a *visual* impression. Do not say the digits to yourself. Reproduce the number in the blank to the right and then check your result. You may have to train yourself to refrain from repeating, in your mind, what you see. Such training will be most helpful for digit perception of longer numbers and also for phrase perception in the next chapter. In addition, such solely visual reaction, once made habitual, will be of incalculable benefit in conquering vocalization, lip movements, and regressions, and in learning to absorb ideas at a rapid rate.

64582	← _____	09091	← _____
63218	← _____	83670	← _____
74521	← _____	76283	← _____
89361	← _____	89321	← _____
73652	← _____	89209	← _____
90013	← _____	98721	← _____
83200	← _____	09412	← _____
62111	← _____	87291	← _____
66966	← _____	93821	← _____
83623	← _____	94729	← _____
98931	← _____	84729	← _____
75231	← _____	64820	← _____
63923	← _____	84720	← _____

84721 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
14729 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
84720 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
84982 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
87210 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
09370 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83920 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
19382 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83921 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
93862 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
45674 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
62590 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
82730 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
94194 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
10982 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
84013 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
94821 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
95726 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
72639 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83729 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
84730 ← \_\_\_\_\_

92836 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
94821 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
36258 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
94820 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
19372 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
73820 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
94821 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
19428 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
72635 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
52739 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
93826 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
42539 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
96879 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
82736 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
74928 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
99288 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
82938 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
73629 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
88332 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
66276 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
00290 ← \_\_\_\_\_

83720 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
90028 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83722 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83722 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
76489 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83227 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83722 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
93899 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
73600 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
11029 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
11297 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
99120 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
84722 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
94822 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83901 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
10299 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
84727 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
74820 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
09287 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83721 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
71819 ← \_\_\_\_\_

92822 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
74479 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83372 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
84729 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83729 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
92831 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
00290 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
90003 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
70330 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83728 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83720 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
13920 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
93822 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
93120 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
93866 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
66477 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
55267 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
74629 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
11029 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
88377 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83720 ← \_\_\_\_\_

83720 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83920 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83720 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
93827 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
93821 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
11029 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
64527 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83720 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
10392 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83720 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
93820 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
19382 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
93820 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
84721 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
84720 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
93827 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
62539 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
73865 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
25792 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
73629 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
82727 ← \_\_\_\_\_

62539 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
02928 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83726 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83728 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
94850 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
94840 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
94804 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
84793 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
84762 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
93802 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83762 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
93802 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
83762 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
94894 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
84796 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
84785 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
72604 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
84705 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
84740 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
94871 ← \_\_\_\_\_  
78954 ← \_\_\_\_\_

41267	← _____	56834	← _____
95813	← _____	72397	← _____
32649	← _____	64235	← _____
83571	← _____	69753	← _____
19485	← _____	85659	← _____
51734	← _____	58781	← _____
67925	← _____	95842	← _____
24359	← _____	31593	← _____
49683	← _____	79128	← _____
73891	← _____	78314	← _____
95472	← _____	74231	← _____
63547	← _____	42365	← _____
82376	← _____	24825	← _____
72652	← _____	64716	← _____
56374	← _____	97258	← _____
34762	← _____	38659	← _____
73897	← _____	47852	← _____
32678	← _____	73259	← _____
52793	← _____	59312	← _____
36456	← _____	61478	← _____
23797	← _____	75469	← _____



23487	← _____	92745	← _____
45731	← _____	84723	← _____
15293	← _____	73986	← _____
81754	← _____	32748	← _____
29395	← _____	62739	← _____
21362	← _____	68973	← _____
54729	← _____	84725	← _____
32748	← _____	93726	← _____
26312	← _____	53264	← _____

### *Preparatory Exercise D-6*

To help you prepare for training in six-digit perception, this exercise in "jumping digits" is presented. The span occupied by the following three-, four-, and five-digit numbers is equal to that occupied by six-digit numbers, but one or more digits are omitted in each instance. When you can do this exercise comfortably, you will be prepared for complete six-digit training.

3 9 9	← _____	42 6	← _____
78 2	← _____	63 2	← _____
9 87	← _____	76 7	← _____
9 0 6	← _____	7 78	← _____
65 2	← _____	6 2 4	← _____
4 4 3	← _____	90 2	← _____
6 63	← _____	8 7 8	← _____

3 2 5   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
2   79   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
51   4   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
3   2 9   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
0   64   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
87   5   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
1   62   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
3 2 5   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
1   0 4   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
29   7   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
0 3 7   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
42   9   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
5   68   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
66 89   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
96 0 0   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
53 2 7   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
91 98   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
55 87   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
7 77 5   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
63 2 1   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
7 44 6   ← \_\_\_\_\_

74 6 4   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
39 1 2   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
8 0 71   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
0 9 65   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
17 9 4   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
54 28   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
390 1   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
2 407   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
39 16   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
703 1   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
68 73   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
0 1 90   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
302 1   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
19 64   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
107 2   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
3 50 9   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
53 2 7   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
4 35 0   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
50 93   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
2 1 92   ← \_\_\_\_\_  
87 765   ← \_\_\_\_\_

0970 1	←	876 43	←
63 293	←	8107 8	←
101 43	←	6431 2	←
1 0678	←	752 09	←
891 09	←	1901 1	←
752 93	←	763 22	←
76 767	←	863 22	←
732 43	←	9817 6	←
9834 1	←	7453 2	←
9 6563	←	0909 0	←
632 65	←	636 32	←
74 327	←	64 908	←
1312 5	←	9 3254	←
532 67	←	2173 1	←
123 54	←	398 47	←
53 234	←	20 149	←
832 65	←	0 7953	←
83 121	←	142 92	←
8 0096	←	63 905	←
7 6653	←	88 903	←
84 652	←	7 3216	←

503 60	← _____	6 9053	← _____
1105 9	← _____	304 37	← _____
68 729	← _____	80 937	← _____

### *Exercise D-6*

(Six-Digit Perception)

Using the Flashmeter card, expose the numbers for a fraction of a second, getting a *visual* impression. Do not say the digits to yourself. Reproduce the number in the blank to the right and then check your result.

824793	← _____	763894	← _____
796531	← _____	782379	← _____
679154	← _____	364717	← _____
563978	← _____	134762	← _____
912345	← _____	376987	← _____
435689	← _____	725368	← _____
135697	← _____	197426	← _____
397428	← _____	274379	← _____
479231	← _____	943762	← _____
246815	← _____	472747	← _____
814563	← _____	329682	← _____
683159	← _____	484263	← _____
632748	← _____	836425	← _____

532576	←	_____	634235	←	_____
548237	←	_____	278694	←	_____
218735	←	_____	387292	←	_____
239745	←	_____	127829	←	_____
361957	←	_____	563752	←	_____
819532	←	_____	732965	←	_____
149761	←	_____	927513	←	_____
276494	←	_____	817637	←	_____
485963	←	_____	235715	←	_____
143569	←	_____	636293	←	_____
674531	←	_____	462146	←	_____
895452	←	_____	472747	←	_____
932356	←	_____	329682	←	_____
176458	←	_____	635243	←	_____
781539	←	_____	874632	←	_____
314859	←	_____	980103	←	_____
183746	←	_____	872352	←	_____
258964	←	_____	847321	←	_____
329176	←	_____	845013	←	_____
461283	←	_____	190367	←	_____
547694	←	_____	906145	←	_____

983682	←	827364	←
839402	←	928732	←
790432	←	837290	←
749382	←	983110	←
714902	←	119820	←
854819	←	198112	←
736291	←	836453	←
954032	←	700080	←
841390	←	839190	←
738572	←	837283	←
903416	←	754637	←
037513	←	736457	←
730215	←	872640	←
803610	←	864729	←
046392	←	346253	←
851497	←	453687	←
835820	←	837920	←
748029	←	948762	←
857263	←	948702	←
784672	←	837130	←
837458	←	948762	←

857639	← _____	635382	← _____
847110	← _____	759285	← _____
110390	← _____	745680	← _____
100983	← _____	002988	← _____
993372	← _____	830012	← _____
847002	← _____	857031	← _____
847833	← _____	846726	← _____
847654	← _____	467930	← _____
783092	← _____	746293	← _____
837625	← _____	736523	← _____
837190	← _____	847302	← _____
836873	← _____	837257	← _____
847992	← _____	837013	← _____
847662	← _____	524389	← _____
938810	← _____	928312	← _____
112911	← _____	039281	← _____
938882	← _____	847291	← _____
847656	← _____	049283	← _____
938982	← _____	930219	← _____
767676	← _____	992038	← _____
757574	← _____	938201	← _____

938208	←	114893	←
938201	←	884933	←
938221	←	667482	←
849200	←	362534	←
837202	←	320913	←
847629	←	463921	←
352703	←	473921	←
462729	←	572931	←
002938	←	562783	←
112938	←	569203	←
882736	←	780298	←
552636	←	990101	←
222526	←	029311	←
938222	←	883772	←
342592	←	883901	←
672628	←	827341	←
823492	←	384902	←
345298	←	746253	←
324592	←	448829	←
827362	←	992139	←
112938	←	837203	←



834499	← _____	928331	← _____
627302	← _____	823399	← _____
728011	← _____	563855	← _____
738203	← _____	452793	← _____
732957	← _____	327392	← _____
920311	← _____	382991	← _____
730293	← _____	335283	← _____
113382	← _____	350294	← _____
827013	← _____	726389	← _____
130495	← _____	736220	← _____
920315	← _____	003911	← _____
820331	← _____	938001	← _____
820178	← _____	736229	← _____
938201	← _____	837465	← _____
832203	← _____	746583	← _____
882013	← _____	029384	← _____
938273	← _____	928374	← _____
003110	← _____	726354	← _____
829031	← _____	049586	← _____
829304	← _____	029374	← _____
930211	← _____	968702	← _____

121394	← _____	293847	← _____
038479	← _____	273645	← _____
847013	← _____	304958	← _____
845302	← _____	506978	← _____
732288	← _____	213161	← _____
737762	← _____	314159	← _____
992899	← _____	516179	← _____
737737	← _____	938405	← _____
939982	← _____	039481	← _____
746293	← _____	849001	← _____
029302	← _____	990013	← _____
029386	← _____	839203	← _____
473829	← _____	405961	← _____

### *Preparatory Exercise D-7*

Here are more jumping digits to prepare you for full seven-digit numbers. More detailed explanation of this device was given under preparatory exercise D-6.

1	4	7	←	_____	33	6	←	_____	
32	8		←	_____	7	0	6	←	_____
8	5	0	←	_____	5	7	2	←	_____
6	15		←	_____	4	9	0	←	_____
2	4	1	←	_____	21	3	←	_____	

1 59	← _____	5 1 3 9	← _____
6 4 8	← _____	79 318	← _____
3 5 1	← _____	839 62	← _____
8 6 5	← _____	1 4631	← _____
71 0	← _____	532 69	← _____
2 38	← _____	96 135	← _____
3 70 9	← _____	781 27	← _____
10 6 8	← _____	10 3 15	← _____
8 932	← _____	225 6 8	← _____
510 1	← _____	66 93 5	← _____
16 19	← _____	5 804 2	← _____
7 537	← _____	3 9514	← _____
21 63	← _____	110 37	← _____
180 4	← _____	73 421	← _____
62 5 8	← _____	5319 2	← _____
8 3 2 4	← _____	973 18	← _____
1 537	← _____	26 503	← _____
7 3 15	← _____	531 909	← _____
26 9 2	← _____	31 4396	← _____
9 35 8	← _____	24180 3	← _____
3 7 0 4	← _____	137 364	← _____

3 51842	← _____	9 07 7	← _____
89 7463	← _____	3 56 9	← _____
214 108	← _____	7 654	← _____
19653 6	← _____	932 5	← _____
718 608	← _____	86 35	← _____
39 1357	← _____	85 7 8	← _____
202 169	← _____	11 1 0	← _____
5 10834	← _____	85 4 2	← _____
4193 25	← _____	1 0 95	← _____
72583 6	← _____	8 77 5	← _____
41 3749	← _____	9 66 2	← _____
327 609	← _____	75 3 4	← _____
11 8	← _____	732 1	← _____
9 8 1	← _____	1 896	← _____
9 7 6	← _____	9 863	← _____
88 6	← _____	89 76	← _____
8 56	← _____	10 8 1	← _____
9 1 6	← _____	65 891	← _____
7 7 6	← _____	7 88 64	← _____
7 8 86	← _____	9 0 652	← _____
75 9 8	← _____	64 89 1	← _____

75 432	←	876 109	←
8765 8	←	74 5610	←
632 7 7	←	75 7891	←
80 11 5	←	1 97843	←
53 228	←	108 642	←
0909 7	←	1064 76	←
8652 8	←	1904 65	←
7362 7	←	0196 45	←
83 848	←	01942 6	←
73 62 9	←	01742 8	←
9653 8	←	81904 2	←
9 7653	←	1 97480	←
8 6423	←	632 819	←
92835 8	←	9 08164	←
948 765	←	90 7624	←
93827 3	←	986 467	←
938 652	←	91 0965	←
8 76349	←	9875 47	←
923 637	←	19865 4	←
9 86261	←	01954 6	←
97 5210	←	672 344	←

## Exercise D-7

### (Seven-Digit Perception)

Using the Flashmeter card, expose the numbers for a fraction of a second, getting a *visual* impression. Do not say the digits to yourself. Reproduce the number in the blank to the right and then check your result.

3478632	← _____	5879431	← _____
1534672	← _____	4621597	← _____
4573652	← _____	8964351	← _____
9342768	← _____	6475129	← _____
5427326	← _____	1832946	← _____
8272691	← _____	3189275	← _____
5376573	← _____	9341562	← _____
3761727	← _____	7596834	← _____
1437626	← _____	9856217	← _____
7262538	← _____	6321839	← _____
4736279	← _____	3298574	← _____
6273976	← _____	9371682	← _____
1354689	← _____	6719543	← _____
2135746	← _____	5341267	← _____
9216874	← _____	8752623	← _____
6492318	← _____	6189275	← _____

4689163	←	3262578	←
7965136	←	3196281	←
9584265	←	2749536	←
7369134	←	8649619	←
4518932	←	4824193	←
7843561	←	7695631	←
8427396	←	8425695	←
7635129	←	8129378	←
4563192	←	1927384	←
3126947	←	9941027	←
1826913	←	8413920	←
6359472	←	9476592	←
9169468	←	1046281	←
3914284	←	1030920	←
1365967	←	8490193	←
5965248	←	7382913	←
4319637	←	7382938	←
5624859	←	7354253	←
6311697	←	3425379	←
3619846	←	8476524	←
5729816	←	3425700	←

3452700	← _____	7446272	← _____
0342537	← _____	8273365	← _____
0937625	← _____	7363378	← _____
3625113	← _____	8373651	← _____
8832276	← _____	0029800	← _____
6635224	← _____	8374652	← _____
7736253	← _____	7362578	← _____
5562556	← _____	9387641	← _____
7366255	← _____	8374621	← _____
4444654	← _____	8374110	← _____
6353334	← _____	9900882	← _____
6355638	← _____	8374462	← _____
9928735	← _____	8293001	← _____
7300037	← _____	9283314	← _____
8370021	← _____	8273021	← _____
7362527	← _____	3629346	← _____
8372998	← _____	0291139	← _____
9992899	← _____	0029341	← _____
8827765	← _____	4632931	← _____
1110001	← _____	7302347	← _____
8272226	← _____	9280013	← _____



3742093	← _____	9203188	← _____
8332013	← _____	8201138	← _____
3823402	← _____	0293312	← _____
9231112	← _____	9302116	← _____
3820163	← _____	0293113	← _____
3800213	← _____	8203382	← _____
4702911	← _____	9203319	← _____
8837201	← _____	8233190	← _____
9028375	← _____	8839221	← _____
7909293	← _____	8266372	← _____
7360182	← _____	5627655	← _____
4528013	← _____	3728013	← _____
8230198	← _____	3278021	← _____
8231408	← _____	3392013	← _____
8302119	← _____	9389204	← _____

## CHAPTER IV

# Training in Instantaneous Phrase Perception

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### *Preview*

#### *You will learn:*

- How to accelerate your visual impression of phrases.
- How to combine perception training on thought phrases with your digit training and thus make doubly sure of fast and accurate perception of reading material.

IN CHAPTER IV, YOU WILL START YOUR TRAINING ON SPLIT-SECOND RECOGNITION OF COMPLETE THOUGHT PHRASES.

## 1. Macular and Peripheral Images

In the reading clinics of American colleges and universities students are taught, through tachistoscopic training, to absorb more words in a single fixation and to reduce to a minimum the time spent on making that fixation. They are trained to make greater use of their peripheral vision, and thereby to increase the width of their interpretable eye spans while reading.

You can find out quickly what peripheral vision is by holding your forefinger up in front of your eyes at a comfortable distance—say ten to twelve inches.

When you do that, and stare at your finger, what do you see?

Your finger, of course. You see your finger clearly and sharply because your eyes are focusing on it. This image comes to you through the macula of the retina of your eyes, that portion of the optical equipment which sees objects in the direct line of vision. We might call your finger, in this instance, your macular image.

But do you see only your finger? Look again, and you will notice, though not so clearly, many things on all sides of your finger. Don't shift your gaze, keep focused directly on your finger, and yet you can see, though perhaps vaguely, many objects above and below the macular image and to the right or left of it, possibly for quite a distance in all directions.

Everything you see in addition to your finger is being absorbed by your peripheral vision; or we may say that the less distinct images you receive on all sides of your finger are the peripheral images.

Perception training, both on digits and on phrases, is intended to help you to react more accurately to the peripheral images you receive while reading.

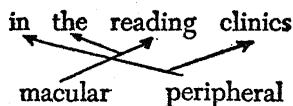
Perception training is purely psychological—it has no effect whatever on the organic structure or on the efficiency of your eyes, but rather sharpens and accelerates your mental interpretations of the ocular images that are sent to your brain after each fix-

tion. Sloppy, slow, or awkward seeing, in reading as in anything else, is the result of poor development of *mental images* and not necessarily a sign of poor vision. By means of perception exercises on digits and phrases you are attempting to teach your mind to interpret as quickly and completely as possible the image transmitted to it by an ocular fixation.<sup>1</sup>

Take, for example, a number of seven digits: 8321689.

Before training, you fixate on this number and interpret only the macular image of —216—; the interpretation of the peripheral image is lost. As your training begins to produce results, you learn to react mentally to more and more of the peripheral image, until finally you can interpret accurately all seven digits in a single quick fixation: three of them (2, 1, 6) perhaps as a macular image, the other four—two on each side of the central digits—as a peripheral image.

A similar phenomenon occurs in phrases. Macular vision transmits the center of the phrase as a stimulus to the brain, and peripheral vision transmits those parts which are to the left and right of the center. A phrase such as *in the reading clinics* can be grasped as an entity if the reader has trained his peripheral vision, but actually there are two images, macular and peripheral, as follows:



It thus stands to reason that the sharper and more efficient your interpretation of peripheral vision becomes, the wider your usable eye spans will be, and the more material you will be able to interpret at each fixation.

Training in phrase perception, while somewhat less fatiguing than training in digit perception, should be taken for no more than four or five minutes at one time and, as nearly as possible, every day. For best results, combine the digit and phrase exercises in one training session, the total time spent on both not exceeding nine minutes.

<sup>1</sup> Needless to say, I am taking for granted that your eyes are capable of good vision at reading distance or have been corrected through glasses or other means. If you feel that your vision is faulty, I strongly recommend a thorough check-up by a competent oculist or optometrist before you proceed with your training.

The Flashmeter (or tachistoscope), as you know, exposes a word or phrase for an amazingly minute space of time, down to as little as one one-hundredth of a second. In that merest fraction of a moment the student must absorb as many words as the merciless operator of the machine wishes to present to him. And since the machine is adjustable both as to the number of words to be exposed and the length of time of their exposure, the reader can slowly and methodically be trained to increase the length of his span of perception while he decreases the time of his fixation.

Let me describe the use of the Flashmeter with a class at the Adult Reading Laboratory. The students sit in front of a large white motion-picture screen, their eyes focused on a particular point on the screen. The operator touches the Flashmeter control, and a word flashes on the screen—flashes on and then flashes off again so quickly that you can scarcely believe it has been there at all. The word has been exposed for one one-hundredth of a second. Yet it is time enough, for these students through practice have learned the art of instantaneous recognition.

Each student writes the word on a sheet of paper in front of him, and then looks back at the screen for the next word. The process is repeated several times, and then the operator adjusts the Flashmeter so that an entire phrase, instead of an individual word, will now be projected on the screen. Since no increase of exposure time is made, the student is unable to use more than a single fixation, even if he is tempted to do so. Unless the phrase is absorbed in one quick glance, no comprehension will result.

And the effect? Most of the class within a few weeks has become adept at reading complete phrases in single instantaneous fixations.

It is true that these students have worked methodically throughout these weeks. Without exception they have found one practice period every day (at home) to work on mimeographed sheets of phrases, sheets containing the same material you will find in the succeeding pages of this chapter; and they have combined this self-training in phrase perception with self-training in digit perception. Their excellence is produced not by the magic of the machine but by the constant practice they have engaged in both at home and in class—practice you will have to engage in also if you feel the need, from your earlier self-diagnosis in these pages, for wider perception spans and more accurate fixations.

In the chapter on digit perception I have already described how to practice for best results. The methods here are essentially the same, but I wish to repeat them, briefly, so that you will be sure to do the right thing.

## 2. How to Use the Flashmeter Card for Phrase Perception

The Flashmeter card, which you have been using for training in digit perception, contains a wider window for phrase perception. This card will simulate for you all the conditions of reading with a genuine Flashmeter. This is how to use it: Place the card over the first phrase in the phrase-perception exercise (page 96) so that the arrow on the card aligns with the arrow on the page (this time the arrow being on the left side). When you are ready to start your practicing, pull the card down just enough to expose the first line of the text in the card window.

As fast as you can move your muscles, push it up again so that the line is once more concealed. Thus you will be acting as a human Flashmeter, with the page of the book taking the part of the motion-picture screen. Now, in that slight fraction of a second in which the line was exposed, your mind was to have absorbed the phrase. If it did not, repeat the process, but do not slacken your speed of exposure and concealment; the idea is not to decrease the speed of your arm movements until it coincides with the speed of your perception, but, on the contrary, to accelerate your speed of absorption so that it will equal the swiftness of your arm. Your job, in other words, is to prove the falsity of the old adage that the hand is quicker than the eye.

Keep at these exercises day by day until you can absorb each complete phrase in an instantaneous fixation.

## 3. Preparatory Training (Word Perception)

Before you start your training in phrase perception, the following exercise, containing single words, is offered to you as a kind of warm-up. Use the Flashmeter card according to previous directions, this time with the phrase window at the top, aligning

the arrow at the left edge of the card with the arrow on the page. Remember to follow the principle of relying on your vision, not on inner speech, to read each word. Refrain, as far as you are able at the present time, from repeating the word to yourself as you see it.

(If, after a few minutes of experimentation, you find this exercise too simple, skip to the phrase-perception exercises beginning on page 96. If, on the contrary, you discover that this work is moderately difficult, continue with the exercise methodically until you feel skillful in perceiving a word quickly and accurately. Once you have conquered this basic skill, you will have a firm foundation for the more demanding work of phrase perception.)

→	big	→	clear
→	book	→	closed
→	saw	→	queer
→	was	→	open
→	once	→	trail
→	came	→	vain
→	little	→	wind
→	furnish	→	crow
→	skip	→	bird
→	chair	→	wish
→	dinner	→	crane
→	lunch	→	elephant
→	cook	→	tiger

→	cottage	→	mandolin
→	ocean	→	adolescent
→	doorway	→	confusing
→	gainful	→	excellent
→	airplane	→	fortified
→	bureau	→	seasoned
→	island	→	electric
→	summer	→	moderation
→	winter	→	cigarette
→	spring	→	pressure
→	Christmas	→	frequently
→	Easter	→	heavily
→	Thanksgiving	→	misguided
→	controlling	→	anonymous
→	investing	→	furthermore
→	cattle	→	adventure
→	character	→	begging
→	insistent	→	pondering
→	ukulele	→	royalty



→	artistic	→	cooperate
→	business	→	community
→	specialty	→	diagnosis
→	especially	→	threatening
→	perennial	→	conferences
→	professional	→	happiness
→	microscopic	→	relaxation
→	impression	→	condemnation
→	identifying	→	manufacture
→	traditional	→	substitution
→	propelled	→	informative
→	religiously	→	poisonous
→	sacrilegious	→	disturbances
→	irreligious	→	presidency
→	consequence	→	pincushion
→	functioned	→	glandular
→	innovations	→	negligent
→	incidentally	→	negligible
→	coincidence	→	contemptible

→	applicable	→	explanation
→	inhospitable	→	notoriously
→	slenderizing	→	ponderously
→	compulsion	→	artistically
→	motionless	→	arithmetic
→	Constantinople	→	geometric
→	astonishment	→	anthropologist
→	amazement	→	zoological
→	preponderance	→	relationship
→	perseverance	→	irrelevantly
→	childishness	→	noncombatant
→	temperature	→	mysteriously
→	molasses	→	enigmatically
→	excessively	→	intestinal
→	degenerative	→	undoubtedly
→	fortification	→	neglectfully
→	omnipotence	→	intellectually
→	ordinarily	→	intelligently
→	unusually	→	intelligibly

→	illegibly	→	mountainous
→	eligible	→	spectacularly
→	confounding	→	correspondent
→	unalluring	→	thunderous
→	expressively	→	oppression
→	powerfully	→	literary
→	generously	→	individuality
→	maximum	→	complexity
→	democracy	→	individually
→	dictatorship	→	grievously
→	invigorating	→	mischievously
→	activities	→	municipality
→	magically	→	capitalization
→	communism	→	discourtesy
→	socialism	→	suggestible
→	approximation	→	unhappiness

The following words are somewhat less common than those on which you have just practiced, and any unusual difficulty with them will indicate a possible vocabulary deficiency. For help in building your reading vocabulary, see chapter VIII, pages 261-297.

→	aberration	→	imperturbable
→	abominable	→	indefatigable
→	abstemious	→	insidious
→	acrimonious	→	intransigent
→	ambidextrous	→	libidinous
→	amorphous	→	Machiavellian
→	anachronism	→	megalomania
→	aphrodisiac	→	mellifluous
→	autonomous	→	mendacity
→	cadaverous	→	Mephistophelean
→	claustrophobia	→	meretricious
→	dipsomaniac	→	metamorphosis
→	effervescence	→	misogyny
→	equanimity	→	obsequious
→	fortuitous	→	parsimonious
→	heterogeneous	→	perfidious
→	homogeneous	→	posthumous
→	hypochondria	→	presentiment
→	idiosyncrasy	→	presumptuous

→ pusillanimous	→ tantamount
→ quintessence	→ titillation
→ recriminations	→ trepidation
→ redundancy	→ utilitarian
→ rudimentary	→ venomous
→ sanctimonious	→ vicissitude
→ sententious	→ vituperative
→ solicitous	→ volatile
→ supercilious	→ wanton
→ surreptitious	→ zenith

These words are a random selection of a suggested list of five hundred important words to be added to your reading vocabulary. The complete list starts on page 290.

#### 4. Exercises in Phrase Perception

Focus your eyes just above the broad arrow on the Flashmeter card. This arrow will point to the approximate center of the phrase, and through a combination of macular and peripheral images you will eventually, after some periods of training, be able to interpret the entire phrase. Rely on your vision, not your speech, in reading each phrase: *refrain, if possible, from repeating the phrase in your mind after you have seen it.* If necessary, allow yourself two or more exposures on each phrase if the first exposure is not successful. However, at each successive exposure, attempt to see the entire phrase, not just that portion you may have missed in the first exposure. Under normal conditions, you will be able to limit yourself to a single exposure after you have

practiced on the first thirty or forty phrases. Remember to keep the time of exposure so small that you will be able to make only *one* fixation on each phrase.

*Phrase-Perception Exercise 1*

→	a single woman	→	I may never
→	a single cup	→	I rarely do
→	a lonely woman	→	I surely do
→	a lonely man	→	I certainly don't
→	an only son	→	a great idea
→	gave her life	→	a foolish idea
→	took his wife	→	two good ideas
→	with a knife	→	some strange ideas
→	unnecessary strife	→	no good idea
→	not too unusual	→	no possible idea
→	hardly unusual	→	a cute idea
→	most unusual	→	a cure for all
→	they tell me	→	a city of stone
→	he tells me	→	a cure-all
→	I tell them	→	a sure cure
→	don't tell me	→	a strange cure

→ a strange medicine	→ found a louse
→ a queer cure	→ rented a house
→ like most people	→ caught a mouse
→ like most men	→ what a louse
→ likes all men	→ a mouse's house
→ likes the women	→ brand new features
→ hates the women	→ for the future
→ sees all men	→ for the farm
→ sees all boys	→ another triumph
→ sees all toys	→ triumphed again
→ has all toys	→ are they now
→ takes all joys	→ he flew high
→ needs all boys	→ solves the problem
→ needs two boys	→ attack the problem
→ wants a girl	→ read a line
→ take his girl	→ line the silk
→ loves his girl	→ of silken sheen
→ love that curl	→ shine the shoe
→ love that soap	→ shoe the horse

→ telephone connection	→ fire the cook
→ hold the line	→ cook for two
→ hold it tight	→ find the book
→ hold it taut	→ book the band
→ come to naught	→ beat the band
→ came at night	→ boot the cook
→ do it right	→ bake the cake
→ right this way	→ take the cake
→ can you wait	→ took the cake
→ read the book	→ hold a wake

### *Phrase-Perception Exercise 2*

*Directions:* Now that you have warmed up with the phrases in exercise 1, you are ready to be a little more demanding of your powers. You allowed yourself to make more than one exposure, if you found such multiple exposure necessary. From now on, consider your training successful only if you see the complete phrase *the first time*; if you do not, go directly to the next phrase and continue working, phrase by phrase, until success is achieved. (But remember to limit the practice time on both phrase and digit perception to a maximum of nine minutes at one session.)

→ a basic need	→ type of learning
→ a basic idea	→ need of warming
→ a third meaning	→ my real purpose
→ a fourth meaning	→ his first purpose



→ he won't marry	→ one strange evening
→ we won't tarry	→ this rare evening
→ can you carry	→ a spare evening
→ you can carry	→ spare an evening
→ with whom I share	→ spare a day
→ he'll get along	→ spare some time
→ good to know	→ take some time
→ good to see	→ an inconvenient time
→ food for thought	→ too much time
→ he had thought	→ full of lime
→ because of him	→ the salty brine
→ with all the contacts	→ rare old wine
→ with many contacts	→ sparkling wine
→ with few contacts	→ very strong wine
→ try to relax	→ this strong wine
→ much more lonely	→ a time of stress
→ much less lonely	→ a time to play
→ one cup only	→ the time to go
→ one enchanted evening	→ continue the work

→	hard work to do	→	a fine car
→	well-paid work	→	a complete lemon
→	old work-horse	→	broken-down hack
→	kind of work	→	money can't buy
→	rare old jerk	→	love and kisses
→	good old jerk	→	down the street
→	jerked his finger	→	fine and dandy
→	made a ringer	→	not a treatment
→	took the ring	→	not a reaction
→	joined the army	→	a bad cold
→	old army game	→	good as gold
→	an exciting game	→	gold and silver
→	big game hunter	→	copper and bronze
→	hunted big game	→	wire and spit
→	smelled a rat	→	a new ingredient
→	on a bat	→	smoother performance
→	weird old house	→	it really is
→	two-story house	→	like a bank
→	Ford has everything	→	like a baby

→	like a baby's bank	→	fat as a rail
→	like a piggy bank	→	thin as a bug
→	like a stuffed owl	→	snug as a bug
→	like a stuffed pig	→	thin as a rail
→	like a stuffy pig	→	built like a house
→	like a wise owl	→	gone and forgotten
→	a wise old owl	→	permanently ruined
→	a prize owl	→	completely bereft
→	air conditioning	→	no single stone
→	Elgin watch	→	had actually seen
→	the night watch	→	blinked his eyes
→	the new watch	→	you rich folks
→	a few watches	→	we poor people
→	truly yours	→	we the people
→	yours truly	→	in order to get
→	a crowded car	→	twice a week
→	the back seat	→	on first seeing
→	the window seat	→	without real fun
→	filled with love	→	What's wrong?

→	Who's there?	→	nodded sadly
→	I'm very sorry	→	a green rat
→	two old people	→	asked the lady
→	too old to care	→	of his choice
→	O.K., I'll wait	→	housing shortage
→	Please wait	→	and asked
→	Step this way	→	Can it be possible?
→	an old shoe	→	the judge read
→	an old witch	→	May I have
→	an old hag	→	the last dance?
→	an old bag	→	looked sternly
→	an old rag	→	replied coolly
→	two old hags	→	just pure luck
→	Lana Turner	→	a fine drizzle
→	a pink elephant	→	stood squirming
→	said the bartender	→	the picture today
→	a cocktail bar	→	there is often
→	walked into	→	what's so bad
→	a yellow snake	→	what's so good

→	what's so new	→	to produce rice
→	that's too good	→	to produce results
→	can also provide	→	known for value
→	beyond the walls	→	tears and sweat
→	beyond the horizon	→	lost and found
→	the French have	→	pulled his leg
→	the British have	→	caught his man
→	the English know	→	loved not wisely
→	the Germans say	→	dug the grave
→	the French believe	→	the man cried
→	we are sure	→	the little dog
→	we aren't sure	→	an awful dope
→	we weren't sure	→	no sooner than
→	my wife and child	→	much less pain
→	my child and wife	→	much less gain
→	my new husband	→	far less strain
→	her new couch	→	no less rain
→	her new husband	→	clean and neat
→	his new mate	→	neat and clean

→	far and wide	→	dirty brunette
→	far and near	→	famous in radio
→	near and far	→	words of love
→	rich or poor	→	toil and trouble
→	poor and rich	→	taken for a ride
→	man or boy	→	opened his purse
→	girl or boy	→	found the answer
→	girls and boys	→	loved not well
→	Sam and Tom	→	fought the war
→	lost his nerve	→	the man laughed
→	lost his dog	→	the big ape
→	will lose his cash	→	a big dose
→	a gallant gesture	→	in the dark
→	Sinclair Lewis	→	better and faster
→	new Chevrolet	→	a better time
→	old Buick	→	playing safe
→	beautiful blond	→	when germs hit
→	glamorous blond	→	exciting story
→	skinny blond	→	I was there

→ were you there?	→ during the winter
→ natural result	→ during the summer
→ important difference	→ during the fall
→ the long cigarette	→ through the spring
→ smart window dressing	→ back at home
→ you can't miss	→ back in town
→ what's new?	→ lost for years
→ key to power	→ when I finished
→ if you ever stood	→ then I began
→ the teacher said	→ then he started
→ as you move	→ then we began
→ how are you?	→ then she stopped
→ in this field	→ no greater sacrifice
→ he can figure	→ happen to you
→ richest of all	→ can happen to you
→ try to visualize	→ could happen to you
→ you have claimed	→ that violet hue
→ no longer alive	→ that violin tone
→ now quite dead	→ that violent man

→ two pink flowers	→ champion of the year
→ two pink aprons	→ mistake of the year
→ two yards wide	→ sprains and aches
→ calling car 12	→ in cash prizes
→ horn of plenty	→ stump the experts
→ plenty of food	→ stamp the envelopes
→ plenty of fools	→ vamp the fellows
→ every tonal value	→ follow the vamps
→ smooth and even	→ follow the champs
→ quick and easy way	→ champ at the bit
→ easy and rapid way	→ clamped tightly shut
→ complete efficiency	→ President Roosevelt
→ fashionable clothing	→ Old Blood and Guts
→ fashionable dresses	→ never the twain
→ clothed fashionably	→ diamond in the rough
→ sure of the best	→ British Empire
→ purest of women	→ Winston Churchill
→ purest of ingredients	→ truth is beauty
→ miracle of the year	→ Christmas cheer



- |                             |                            |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|
| → life in the raw           | → Remember Pearl Harbor    |
| → Seeing is believing       | → Remember the Alamo       |
| → the Four Freedoms         | → confuse the issue        |
| → once upon a time          | → Grimm's Fairy Tales      |
| → a stitch in time          | → heat wave                |
| → life is beautiful         | → musical comedy           |
| → the Moscow Pact           | → blood, sweat, and tears  |
| → the Axis criminals        | → wine, women, and song    |
| → front-line trenches       | → Let's fall in love       |
| → stay of execution         | → Let 'em eat cake!        |
| → Anatomy of Melancholy     | → like an old fool         |
| → the gay nineties          | → an old dog new tricks    |
| → the uses of adversity     | → all is not gold          |
| → the quality of mercy      | → something in Denmark     |
| → On Being a Real Person    | → ready, willing, and able |
| → Gone with the Wind        | → the Maginot Line         |
| → Grapes of Wrath           | → the Siegfried Line       |
| → Tree Grows in Brooklyn    | → Pause that refreshes     |
| → Fifty-four forty or fight | → Skin you love to touch   |

→ Mairzy Doats	→ To be or not to be
→ we the people	→ that is the question
→ for which it stands	→ the City of New York
→ of the people	→ Emperor Hirohito
→ by the people	→ <i>The New York Times</i>
→ postwar plans	→ the life of Reilley
→ the Electoral College	→ a wonderful time
→ professorial dignity	→ Wish you were here
→ while the sun shines	→ the time of your life
→ clutching at straws	→ Eat and be merry
→ broke the camel's back	→ God save the king
→ Yanks are coming	→ The king is dead
→ old woman who	→ Long live the king
→ lived in a shoe	→ Home on the range
→ cupboard was bare	→ read better and faster
→ Mary had a little lamb	→ How to make friends
→ Can spring	→ and influence people
→ be far behind?	→ a stitch in time
→ It's toasted	→ a needle in a haystack

- |                        |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| → hickory dickory dock | → Buy more bonds          |
| → Ten Little Indians   | → in the nick of time     |
| → live and let live    | → a pair of Kilkenny cats |
| → Thomas E. Dewey      | → poor cock robin         |
| → the end of the road  | → Watch the Fords go by   |
| → half a loaf          | → They satisfy            |
| → In Bed We Cry        | → crazy as a coot         |
| → liddle lamzee divy   | → as happy as a lark      |

### *Phrase-Perception Exercise 3*

*Directions:* Now you will start using the Flashmeter card on phrases which continue in meaningful succession. We shall start with the simple and proceed to the complex—the first group of selections will be on an unusually easy level of vocabulary and sentence structure; later groups will be of a more difficult and adult character.

Aim, as before, for instantaneous recognition of each line which appears in the card window, and move the card quickly enough so that you will be able to make only one fixation for each exposure. (If possible, this exposure should be between one twenty-fifth and three twenty-fifths of a second in duration.) The criterion of your success in this training will be that each selection continues to make sense as the phrases flash through the card window.<sup>2</sup>

- |                       |                   |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| → At Saratoga         | → the State       |
| → are acres and acres | → of New York     |
| → of ground where     | → grows thousands |

<sup>2</sup> From *Journeys Through Wordland*, copyright, 1942, by Amsco School Publications, Inc., New York. Reprinted with permission.

→	of trees	→	was that
→	every year.	→	fierce little
→	These trees	→	grub worms
→	are grown	→	had been feasting
→	from little seedlings	→	on the tender
→	which are planted	→	young plants.
→	in the ground	→	It was not known
→	in early spring.	→	where the grubs
→	One year	→	had come from,
→	the men	→	but there they were,
→	in charge	→	and no one knew
→	of the trees	→	how to get
→	became aware	→	rid of them.
→	that many seeds	→	Just then
→	were not	→	a little skunk
→	growing properly.	→	happened by
→	They soon learned	→	—just an ordinary
→	that the reason	→	everyday little skunk.
→	for this	→	Now, there's nothing

→	a skunk	→	of peril.
→	loves better	→	The gardeners
→	for his breakfast,	→	at Saratoga
→	lunch, and supper	→	named the
→	than nice fat	→	skunk Eric,
→	juicy grubs.	→	built him
→	There were millions	→	a warm house
→	of grubs,	→	for winter,
→	and only	→	made sure
→	one skunk	→	he always had
→	but this skunk	→	a generous supply
→	had a	→	of food
→	wonderful appetite;	→	and, in short,
→	it was not long	→	did their best
→	before the last	→	to overcome
→	of the grubs	→	any desire
→	had disappeared	→	he might have
→	and the trees	→	to go away.
→	were out	→	Eric stayed—

→	maybe he	→	the lives
→	knew that	→	of thousands
→	all by himself	→	of young trees
→	he could save	→	every year.

### *Phrase-Perception Exercise 4*

Continue as before.<sup>3</sup>

→	In Colfax,	→	who, you surely
→	California,	→	must admit,
→	is a	→	have a most
→	snake ranch where 20,000	→	peculiar job.
→	rattlesnakes	→	And,
→	of every size,	→	you will probably add,
→	color,	→	a most risky one.
→	and description	→	But so skillfully
→	live.	→	and carefully
→	The snakes	→	do the Evanses
→	are raised	→	handle the snakes
→	by Mr. and Mrs.	→	that in
→	S. E. Evans,	→	twenty-two years

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

→	neither one has	→	really disturb
→	ever been bitten!	→	the snakes.
→	Mr. and Mrs. Evans	→	Twenty-five to fifty
→	report that	→	rattlers are kept
→	rattlesnakes are	→	in a deep pit
→	delicate creatures	→	where the visitors
→	which must receive	→	may see them.
→	excellent attention	→	But a snake
→	if they are	→	can remain
→	to live.	→	in the pit
→	Over 1,000 visitors	→	only a brief time,
→	come to the ranch	→	because it becomes
→	on Sundays	→	very nervous
→	to view	→	and uncomfortable
→	the snakes.	→	when watched
→	These visitors,	→	by so many
→	peculiarly enough,	→	staring people!

## Phrase-Perception Exercise 5

Continue as before.<sup>4</sup>

→	There is a man	→	in a cage,
→	in Seattle, Washington,	→	roll its eyes,
→	who has made	→	move its ears,
→	an ape.	→	toss its head,
→	"How can anyone	→	and stamp
→	make a real ape!"	→	its foot.
→	you will	→	It can even
→	promptly exclaim.	→	grasp an accordion
→	Well,	→	in its
→	Bob Seymour's ape	→	hairy fingers
→	is mechanical,	→	and play
→	but it can do	→	a tune.
→	so many things	→	What is
→	that it is	→	the explanation
→	very much like	→	of this wonderful
→	a real ape.	→	life-like animal?
→	It can sit	→	It moves

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*



→ by electricity.	→ in a zoo
→ Mr. Seymour,	→ you would
→ an expert electrician,	→ undoubtedly assume
→ spent four years	→ that it
→ and \$5,000	→ was alive.
→ on his	→ Mr. Seymour
→ mechanical ape.	→ has not yet
→ Its appearance is	→ named his ape.
→ so real	→ Can you think
→ and its actions	→ of an
→ so ape-like	→ appropriate name
→ that if you	→ for this
→ saw it	→ uncommon creature?

### *Phrase-Perception Exercise 6*

Continue as before.<sup>5</sup>

→ In the	→ a 21-foot giraffe.
→ Bronx Zoo,	→ You will have
→ New York City,	→ no difficulty
→ lives Jack,	→ recognizing him

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

→	—he has such	→	what Jack eats?
→	a long neck!	→	Here is
→	You can imagine	→	his daily menu:
→	how little	→	1¾ pails
→	he has	→	of oats,
→	to exert himself	→	12 potatoes,
→	to reach	→	an apple,
→	the top	→	3 carrots,
→	of his cage.	→	half a cabbage,
→	(And he	→	and 25 pounds
→	reaches it	→	of hay.
→	quite often,	→	That's a
→	because he	→	considerable amount
→	likes to lick	→	of food,
→	the paint	→	isn't it?
→	with his	→	But if you weighed
→	12-inch tongue!)	→	over 2,000 pounds
→	Would you like	→	(as Jack does)
→	to know	→	you'd doubtless need

→ just as much	→ and like
→ food.	→ to feed
→ Giraffes belong to	→ on the top leaves
→ a vanishing race,	→ of trees.
→ and can be found	→ Do you think
→ in just	→ perhaps
→ a few places	→ that's the way
→ in Africa.	→ they acquired
→ They are timid,	→ their long necks?
→ can run swiftly	

### *Phrase-Perception Exercise 7*

Continue as before.<sup>6</sup>

→ This is the story	→ was just about
→ of an American,	→ a year old).
→ Henry B. Clarke,	→ Clarke decided
→ who was	→ to come home
→ in England	→ to spend
→ in September, 1940	→ Christmas
→ (when the war	→ with his family

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

→ in America.	→ from an English friend,
→ Unable to get	→ and set out
→ a ticket	→ in convoy
→ for any boat	→ on the 26th
→ or plane	→ of September.
→ that left	→ Exciting experiences
→ before February,	→ then came
→ and realizing	→ thick and fast.
→ he'd have to	→ First the convoy
→ find some	→ in which the yacht
→ less common means	→ was sailing
→ of transportation	→ was bombed
→ if he wished	→ by Nazi planes.
→ to sit down	→ Clarke turned back
→ to a Christmas dinner	→ to Portsmouth,
→ in his home	→ reaching that city
→ in New York,	→ just in time
→ Clarke bought	→ to witness
→ a yacht	→ the beginning

→ of a bombing attack	→ decided the yacht
→ upon it.	→ was not worth boarding.
→ Putting out	→ He waved cheerily,
→ to sea again,	→ and the sub
→ the yacht met	→ turned around,
→ two fierce gales,	→ soon vanishing
→ one of which	→ below the waves.
→ smashed its jib	→ The yacht continued
→ and radio transmitter.	→ its journey,
→ One morning	→ and after experiencing
→ Clarke and the crew	→ many more
→ were startled to see	→ disagreeable difficulties,
→ an Italian submarine	→ Clarke finally reached
→ approaching on the surface	→ America
→ of the water,	→ ten weeks
→ with a deck gun	→ from the day
→ trained upon them.	→ he had left England
→ Fortunately,	→ You can imagine
→ the submarine commander	→ how happy

→	he was	→	his family again.
→	to see		

### *Phrase-Perception Exercise 8*

Continue as before.<sup>7</sup>

→	Most of us	→	many a
→	think of sharks	→	local fisherman
→	as fearful fish	→	has become richer
→	that chew off	→	catching the huge creatures
→	swimmers' legs	→	and selling them
→	and in other	→	at \$210 a ton
→	disagreeable ways	→	in the San Francisco market.
→	make general nuisances	→	Harlan Major,
→	of themselves.	→	a New York
→	But the people	→	fishing authority,
→	of Fort Bragg, California,	→	stopped at
→	will tell you	→	Fort Bragg
→	with no uncertainty	→	when he made
→	that sharks are	→	a fishing tour
→	their best friends—	→	of the country.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

→ He was amazed	→ in Vitamin A
→ at the great activity	→ (something that
→ going on there,	→ keeps people
→ for Fort Bragg,	→ strong and healthy).
→ once a sleepy little	→ Chemical laboratories
→ fishing village,	→ were buying
→ was now experiencing	→ all the soup-fin
→ unusual prosperity.	→ shark livers
→ Mr. Major decided	→ they could
→ to find out why.	→ get hold of
→ He went to	→ to make into
→ San Francisco	→ little pills
→ and learned	→ for people who
→ that the livers	→ wish to avoid
→ of soup-fin sharks	→ illnesses.
→ (the kind	→ And so every day
→ around Fort Bragg)	→ the Fort Bragg fishermen
→ had proved to be	→ put out to sea
→ uncommonly rich	→ to look for

- |                            |                   |
|----------------------------|-------------------|
| → the fearful creatures    | → a nation        |
| → whose livers are keeping | → in good health! |

### *Phrase-Perception Exercise 9*

Continue as before.<sup>s</sup>

- |                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| → Schlemiel lives        | → or stand and stare    |
| → in the zoo             | → at the                |
| → in Central Park,       | → zoo visitors.         |
| → New York City.         | → (Maybe that's why     |
| → He is only             | → he's so fat.)         |
| → ten years old,         | → Thousands of visitors |
| → yet already weighs     | → every week            |
| → about 3500 pounds.     | → stare at him,         |
| → Schlemiel doesn't like | → too,                  |
| → to exert himself       | → thinking:             |
| → too much.              | → "What an uncommonly   |
| → He doesn't do much     | → strange animal!"      |
| → all day,               | → But Schlemiel is      |
| → except lie             | → so agreeable          |
| → in the sun             | → that this doesn't     |

<sup>s</sup> *Ibid.*



→	annoy him at all.	→	of potatoes.
→	Did you think	→	No matter
→	that Jack the giraffe	→	how full
→	was a big eater?	→	he is,
→	Well,	→	he can always
→	through Schlemiel's	→	be tempted
→	powerful jaws	→	with an apple,
→	every day	→	which he gets
→	pass 25 pounds	→	as a treat
→	of hay,	→	every once
→	13 pounds	→	in a while.
→	of beets,	→	A hippo,
→	5 pounds	→	strange as it may seem,
→	of carrots,	→	belongs to
→	15 pounds	→	the pig family.
→	of oats,	→	His clumsy appearance
→	10 pounds	→	comes from
→	of bran,	→	his huge mouth
→	and 10 pounds	→	and head,

- |   |                    |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|---|--------------------|
| → | and from his       | → | How would you like |
| → | very long body     | → | to adopt           |
| → | mounted on         | → | a baby hippo       |
| → | short chunky legs. | → | as a pet?          |

### *Phrase-Perception Exercise 10*

*Directions:* If success has attended your efforts so far, you are ready to read selections of a more adult nature with the same split-second-fixation attack. Continue as before on the following material.<sup>9</sup>

- |   |                            |   |                         |
|---|----------------------------|---|-------------------------|
| → | Edgar Rice Burroughs,      | → | About 36,000,000 copies |
| → | creator of Tarzan,         | → | of his 23               |
| → | a fictional Caspar Hauser, | → | Tarzan books            |
| → | or ape-man,                | → | have been sold,         |
| → | whose jungle exploits      | → | and his income          |
| → | are known                  | → | from the sale           |
| → | to people                  | → | of his books,           |
| → | in the four corners        | → | the Tarzan movies       |
| → | of the globe,              | → | and cartoons            |
| → | died on March 19           | → | is estimated at         |
| → | at the age                 | → | \$10,000,000.           |
| → | of 74.                     | → | "Tarzan of the Apes"    |

<sup>9</sup> From *Publishers' Weekly*. Reprinted with permission.

→	was Mr. Burroughs'	→	too fantastic.
→	first published book;	→	He then sent it
→	it was written	→	to <i>Argosy Magazine</i>
→	while the author was	→	which promptly
→	a department manager	→	accepted it
→	at Sears Roebuck,	→	for serial publication.
→	and was based	→	After a few installments
→	on extensive research	→	had appeared,
→	which Mr. Burroughs did	→	the late Herbert A. Gould,
→	in his spare time	→	then director
→	at the Chicago	→	of McClurg's
→	Public Library.	→	retail store
→	He first sent	→	on Wabash Avenue,
→	the manuscript	→	discovered there was
→	to a number of	→	a demand
→	Eastern publishers	→	for a book
→	but they all	→	that would contain
→	turned it down	→	the complete story.
→	as being	→	Mr. Gould

→	talked it over	→	The last
→	with the late	→	Tarzan book,
→	Joseph Bray,	→	"Tarzan and the
→	then head of	→	Foreign Legion,"
→	McClurg's	→	was published
→	publishing department,	→	three years ago.
→	who immediately saw	→	Mr. Burroughs
→	its tremendous possibilities.	→	was the author
→	McClurg published it	→	of thirty-five
→	in 1914	→	other books
→	and it was	→	of adventure stories,
→	an instant success.	→	and hundreds of
→	Mr. Burroughs	→	short stories.
→	found himself famous	→	He set up
→	overnight.	→	his own
→	Succeeding Tarzan books	→	publishing company
→	became best sellers,	→	in southern California
→	too,	→	some years ago;
→	as soon as	→	it is located in a town
→	they were published.	→	called Tarzana.

## Phrase-Perception Exercise 11

Continue as before.

### THE IMPROVEMENT OF EYE MOVEMENTS

by Ruth Strang<sup>10</sup>

- |                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| → Good eye movements   | → With the right kind    |
| → underlie             | → of training,           |
| → efficient reading.   | → they become            |
| → Poor eye movements   | → more efficient         |
| → are signs of         | → just as the fingers    |
| → lack of skill        | → become more skillful   |
| → in reading.          | → with practice          |
| → Accordingly,         | → on the piano           |
| → we should understand | → or the violin.         |
| → how the eyes work    | → In order to understand |
| → and how to make them | → how to train the eyes, |
| → work better.         | → it is first necessary  |
| → The eyes             | → to learn how           |
| → can be trained.      | → they are used          |

<sup>10</sup> From *Study Type of Reading Exercises*. Reprinted with permission. Dr. Strang is Professor of Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, and Director of the High School and College Reading Center of Teachers College. She is the author of numerous books and articles on reading improvement.

→	in reading.	→	along the lines
→	As you read	→	of print
→	a line of print,	→	is somewhat like
→	your eyes	→	the movement
→	are not moving smoothly	→	of an automobile
→	and steadily	→	down a street
→	across the page.	→	with traffic lights—
→	Rather,	→	with many
→	they move	→	stops and starts
→	“by fits and starts”—	→	in its progress.
→	they make	→	During the movement
→	a swift movement,	→	from one pause to another,
→	pause,	→	no words
→	make another swift movement,	→	are recognized.
→	pause again,	→	The printed line
→	and so on	→	is a blur
→	until they reach	→	because the eye moves
→	the end of the line.	→	like a flash
→	The movement of the eyes	→	between stops.

→ There is not time	→ A good reader may pause
→ to see the words	→ only four times
→ clearly.	→ in reading a line
→ Only about 6 per cent	→ on which a poor reader
→ of the total time	→ may make nine pauses.
→ of reading	→ The more pauses,
→ is spent in movement.	→ of course,
→ It is	→ the slower is the rate
→ during the pauses	→ of reading.
→ that we comprehend	→ The good reader
→ the meaning	→ may be able
→ of the printed words.	→ to recognize
→ Even the pauses	→ four or five words
→ are only about	→ in a single pause;
→ one-fourth of a second	→ the poor reader only one.
→ in length,	→ The number of pauses
→ but that is long enough	→ per line
→ to take in	→ also depends
→ an "eyeful" of words.	→ on the difficulty

→ of the material	→ of the eyes of people
→ and the purpose	→ who were reading.
→ for which	→ The pictures show clearly
→ we are reading it.	→ how many pauses
→ Stories and other easy material	→ each person's eyes made
→ which we read	→ as he read,
→ just for pleasure	→ and whether his eyes
→ can be understood	→ often moved backward
→ with very few pauses	→ along the line of print.
→ per line,	→ You can see for yourself
→ while mathematics problems	→ how one's eyes work
→ and other difficult material	→ when he reads,
→ which we must study	→ by making
→ require a larger number	→ the following experiment:
→ of pauses per line.	→ Punch a small hole
→ These facts about	→ in the center
→ eye movements	→ of a separate page
→ were discovered	→ of print.
→ by taking moving pictures	→ Then ask your friend



→ to hold the sheet	→ to the beginning
→ at a comfortable	→ of the next line.
→ reading distance	→ Few pauses,
→ from his eyes.	→ no backward movements,
→ Put one eye	→ and an accurate jump
→ to the little hole	→ from one line
→ in the sheet	→ to the next
→ and watch his eyes	→ are signs
→ as he reads.	→ of efficient reading.
→ Count the number of times	→ Eye movements
→ his eyes pause	→ cannot be improved
→ on each line.	→ by thinking too much
→ See whether his eyes	→ about them.
→ sometimes move back	→ To do so
→ across the line	→ might put us
→ and how quickly	→ in the state of the centipede
→ and accurately	→ that got mixed up
→ his eyes sweep	→ as soon as it began
→ from the end of one line	→ to think about

→ which leg	→ our eyes are making.
→ to move first.	→ If we eagerly
→ The best way	→ read material
→ to improve eye movements	→ that is not
→ is to read	→ too difficult for us
→ a good deal	→ our eyes
→ of interesting material	→ naturally take in
→ with keen attention.	→ a group of words
→ Such reading,	→ at each pause.
→ with no attention	→ The eyes are not checked
→ to the mechanics	→ in their forward movement
→ of eye movements,	→ by lack of comprehension.
→ trains the eyes.	→ Nor do they
→ For example,	→ have to go back
→ in reading a paragraph,	→ over the line
→ it is better to think	→ to pick up the meaning
→ of its meaning	→ of some of the words.
→ than to wonder	→ Reading many easy
→ how many pauses	→ interesting books

- |                             |                                |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| → is the best way           | → An attempt to grasp          |
| → to improve eye movements. | → the meaning                  |
| → A second way              | → of this short line           |
| → of increasing             | → by means of                  |
| → the number of words       | → only one pause               |
| → we can take in            | → gives excellent practice     |
| → at a single pause         | → in increasing the number     |
| → of the eyes               | → of words recognized          |
| → is to use                 | → at each stop.                |
| → the daily newspaper       | → A third way of learning      |
| → for practice material.    | → to take in the meaning       |
| → The newspaper column      | → of a phrase or clause        |
| → is so narrow              | → rather than of single words  |
| → that good readers         | → is to use                    |
| → can get the meaning       | → practice cards               |
| → of a line                 | → which we can make ourselves. |
| → by letting their eyes     | → These cards may be           |
| → rest on it                | → three by five inches         |
| → only once.                | → in size.                     |

→ In the center	→ of a second.
→ of each card	→ In that short time,
→ we may either type	→ we should try to recognize
→ one or more words	→ the words on it.
→ or paste words	→ At first,
→ cut from magazines.	→ we may be able
→ The first set of cards	→ to recognize
→ may have one word	→ only one or two words
→ on each;	→ in a quick glance.
→ the second set,	→ Some students
→ two words;	→ like to use
→ and so on up to	→ a small notebook
→ five or six words.	→ for this kind of drill.
→ We may ask someone	→ They type a group of words
→ to hold the cards	→ on each page
→ at a comfortable distance	→ and practice getting
→ from our eyes	→ the meaning
→ and uncover each card	→ of the words
→ for about one-fourth	→ as they quickly turn

→	each page.	→	a line of print
→	If we can get the meaning	→	rapidly
→	of three or four words	→	and are well on our way
→	together,	→	toward becoming
→	quick as a flash,	→	good readers.
→	we can take in		

### *Phrase-Perception Exercise 12*

Continue as before.<sup>11</sup>

→	The actual size	→	you have either lost contact
→	of your vocabulary	→	with many of those
→	is of	→	you once knew,
→	considerably less importance	→	or have become
→	than the rate	→	familiar with,
→	at which it is growing.	→	at best,
→	If five or ten years ago	→	an additional twenty-five
→	you were able to recognize	→	or fifty,
→	ten thousand words,	→	then your vocabulary
→	and if today	→	is in a very pitiful

<sup>11</sup> From *Power with Words* by Norman Lewis, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York.

→ and weakened condition.	→ he has picked up
→ It does not have	→ are fresh and alive
→ the richness nor the power	→ to him.
→ of the vocabulary	→ He does his speaking
→ of (for example)	→ and thinking
→ a person of eighteen	→ with them.
→ who may know no more	→ He is still interested
→ than seven	→ in the things
→ or eight thousand	→ they represent.
→ words,	→ The fact that
→ but whose vocabulary	→ he has been learning
→ has been increasing	→ new words every week
→ at the rate of	→ and every month
→ five hundred	→ shows that he is
→ to one thousand words	→ intellectually alive,
→ a year	→ that his curiosity
→ for the previous four years	→ about the world
→ of his life.	→ around him
→ The new words	→ is daily demanding

→ and receiving fulfillment.	→ as we approach
→ Similarly,	→ the late twenties,
→ the stagnant vocabulary,	→ for beyond that age,
→ no matter what	→ when we have settled
→ great stature	→ into a definite
→ it might have reached	→ and seldom changing
→ before it stopped growing,	→ routine of living—
→ forebodes	→ when the world
→ an unhealthy diminution	→ no longer presents
→ of intellectual alertness	→ a picture
→ and curiosity.	→ of never-ceasing wonder
→ When knowledge of words	→ and puzzlement—
→ has become static,	→ when we begin
→ so has interest	→ to realize
→ in the phenomena	→ that the thirties,
→ of life.	→ or perhaps the forties,
→ In general,	→ are inescapably advancing
→ vocabulary reaches	→ upon us—
→ its maximum size	→ when a certain

→ mental complacency	→ of the wonderful mysteries
→ begins to twine	→ of life:
→ its fingers	→ which,
→ around our minds—	→ fundamentally,
→ why then,	→ is what words are
→ that is the time	→ before they are
→ that our interest	→ anything else.
→ in new words	→ That is why children
→ begins to lose	→ and adolescents
→ its youthful sharpness.	→ increase their vocabularies
→ Young people	→ at a rate
→ are in love	→ truly prodigious
→ with new words	→ in comparison
→ (provided these words	→ to their more sophisticated
→ are not beyond	→ and phlegmatic elders.
→ the scope	→ Older people
→ of their understanding),	→ may often seem
→ not as words,	→ to be greatly interested
→ but as symbols	→ in increasing



→ their vocabularies—	→ <i>simply because they want</i>
→ but for a reason	→ <i>larger vocabularies.</i>
→ worlds apart	→ I refer, of course,
→ from the one motivating	→ to the average adult
→ their youngsters.	→ who has passed
→ Young people are avid	→ his or her middle twenties.
→ for new words,	→ There are many
→ because these words	→ exceptional people
→ represent growth	→ to whom
→ and experience	→ the previous statements
→ and life—	→ do not,
→ three vital needs	→ by any means,
→ of those exciting years	→ apply,
→ before maturity is reached.	→ even remotely.
→ <i>Older people</i>	→ You may be one
→ <i>on the other hand,</i>	→ of these exceptional
→ <i>generally want consciously</i>	→ people.
→ <i>to increase their</i>	→ At the Human
→ <i>vocabularies</i>	→ Engineering Laboratory

→ in Hoboken, New Jersey,	→ that this attitude
→ Dr. Johnson O'Connor	→ was one of the
→ has found,	→ potent factors
→ by scientific testing,	→ which contributed
→ that these exceptional adults	→ to their success.
→ whose vocabularies	→ The <i>only</i> common quality
→ never stop growing,	→ that Dr. O'Connor
→ no matter what their age,	→ was able to isolate
→ are the most	→ in studying
→ successful people	→ these thousands
→ in the country:	→ of successful men
→ the business executives	→ and women
→ and the top names	→ was not,
→ in professional fields.	→ surprisingly enough,
→ Their vocabularies	→ any such thing
→ continued to grow	→ as tenacity,
→ because their interest in life	→ or progressiveness,
→ never ceased growing;	→ or imagination,
→ and it cannot be doubted	→ or honesty,

→	or ruthlessness	→	whom he tested
→	or even luck.	→	had an unusually
→	Dr. O'Connor found,	→	large vocabulary.
→	somewhat to his	→	In no other particular
→	own astonishment,	→	were all these people
→	that every successful person	→	identically!

### *Phrase-Perception Exercise 13*

Continue as before.<sup>12</sup>

→	America	→	are <i>skillful</i> readers.
→	is the most literate nation	→	Skill in reading
→	on the face of the earth.	→	is a
→	Nowhere else	→	highly refined quality
→	does the printed word	→	that involves
→	reach so great	→	many complex abilities.
→	a number,	→	A skillful reader
→	or have so marked	→	is a rapid reader.
→	an effect.	→	His eyes can skim
→	But that does not mean	→	over a page
→	that all Americans	→	with great speed;

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

→	his mind	→	a page of print
→	can grasp immediately	→	does not contain
→	and retain for long periods	→	individual words
→	the facts and ideas	→	and sentences
→	in front of him.	→	and paragraphs,
→	The skillful reader	→	but only information;
→	instinctively reacts	→	and this information
→	to the mood	→	his mind,
→	and atmosphere	→	like a dry sponge,
→	which an author	→	sops up
→	has created.	→	without conscious effort.
→	For him		

### *Phrase-Perception Exercise 14*

Continue as before.<sup>13</sup>

→	It may possibly sound	→	care,
→	paradoxical	→	and thoroughness
→	that the speediest readers	→	have always been considered
→	are the most skillful readers.	→	the highest of virtues,
→	Slowness,	→	and we have all admired

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

→ the tenacious,	→ Scientific testing
→ plodding tortoise	→ has established
→ who got there ahead	→ that those readers
→ of the speedy hare.	→ who can sprint
→ On the other hand,	→ through a selection
→ it is logical to assume	→ absorb far more
→ that what one can	→ from what they read
→ do well	→ than those who
→ one can also do quickly.	→ struggle and plod.

### *Phrase-Perception Exercise 15*

Continue as before.<sup>14</sup>

→ If you are over	→ that you were taught
→ twenty-five years of age,	→ to do a good deal
→ and are the product	→ of oral reading,
→ of the average	→ or as your primary teachers
→ American education	→ called it,
→ of the 1920's	→ "reading out loud."
→ or before,	→ This was
→ the chances are	→ the greatest mistake

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

→ education ever made.	→ From that point on,
→ Much of the difficulty	→ any emphasis
→ that freshmen are having	→ on oral reading
→ in colleges today	→ slows up
→ can be traced	→ silent reading—
→ to incorrect habits	→ for in oral reading,
→ of reading	→ words are read
→ which years of	→ one by one,
→ oral reading	→ while in skillful
→ built up in them.	→ silent reading,
→ Oral reading must	→ words are not read
→ of course	→ at all,
→ be taught	→ but only phrases
→ in the first	→ and thought sequences.
→ and possibly	→ The eye and mind
→ the second grades,	→ can absorb
→ until the young pupil	→ a page of print
→ becomes quite familiar	→ <i>four times as rapidly</i>
→ with the reading process.	→ as the vocal organs

→ can pronounce the words → that page.  
→ that make up

### *Phrase-Perception Exercise 16*

Continue as before.

#### THE INTERVAL IN LEARNING

by Bruno Furst<sup>15</sup>

→ The interval between → of these intervals,  
→ learning and repetition → but I have not yet seen  
→ is much more important → a single schoolbook  
→ than people → that takes advantage  
→ usually assume, → of these findings.  
→ and it is one → Ebbinghaus,  
→ of the factors → a German professor,  
→ regrettably neglected → devoted much time  
→ in our school education. → to experiments  
→ Almost every good book → in this particular line,  
→ on psychology and learning → and his tests  
→ stresses the importance → have been checked

<sup>15</sup> From *Stop Forgetting*, Greenberg: Publisher, New York. Reprinted with permission of the author. Dr. Furst is Director of The School of Memory and Concentration in New York.

→ and double-checked	→ for several years,
→ in almost every country.	→ may have lost
→ You know	→ the ability
→ as well as I do	→ completely
→ that it is entirely wrong	→ and be forced
→ to assume	→ to admit
→ that any subject matter	→ that he can neither
→ which we once learned	→ speak it
→ and mastered	→ nor understand it
→ will remain	→ any more.
→ our mental property	→ Of course,
→ forever.	→ that cannot happen
→ You know	→ if he uses the language
→ that a person	→ constantly.
→ may have spoken	→ Use is repetition,
→ a foreign language	→ and repetition
→ rather fluently	→ is necessary
→ but,	→ for everything
→ by not using it	→ which we wish



→	to keep alive	→	requires only
→	in our minds.	→	38 repetitions
→	So far,	→	if they are
→	the facts are known	→	spread out
→	to everyone.	→	over three days.
→	What is not	→	A more complex subject
→	so well known	→	which required
→	is that	→	504 repetitions
→	the spacing	→	in one day
→	of repetition	→	could be mastered
→	plays a very important	→	by repeating it
→	role	→	158 times
→	in time-saving.	→	the first day,
→	Ebbinghaus	→	109 times
→	has found	→	the second day,
→	that a subject	→	and 75 times
→	which requires	→	the third day.
→	68 repetitions	→	Thus repetitions
→	if learned in one day	→	for all three

→ consecutive days	→ of learning
→ add up to 342,	→ and repetition.
→ effecting a saving	→ Whenever
→ of time	→ you have to learn
→ amounting to	→ something new,
→ approximately 30 per cent	→ do not try
→ if compared	→ to master it
→ with the 504 repetitions	→ completely
→ on a single day.	→ on the first day.
→ Since time is,	→ Be satisfied
→ or should be,	→ if you acquire
→ of great value	→ a fair knowledge
→ to all of us,	→ of it,
→ nobody should fail	→ allow it to
→ to make use of	→ sink into your memory,
→ such a time-saving device,	→ and then repeat it
→ especially if it is	→ on the two following days,
→ so easy to apply	→ and you will see
→ as the proper spacing	→ that you can master it

→ better	→ on which
→ with less effort.	→ we focused our attention
→ It is one	→ before going to sleep
→ of the strange phenomena	→ and which proved
→ of the human mind	→ too tough
→ that memory	→ for solution.
→ continues to work	→ The only explanation
→ even when	→ which is possible
→ the actual task	→ for both phenomena
→ of learning	→ is the fact
→ has ceased	→ that our subconscious mind
→ and even when	→ continues working
→ we are asleep.	→ and thinking
→ It is the same	→ while our conscious mind
→ peculiar occurrence	→ is asleep.
→ which helps us	→ The same mental power
→ to solve a problem	→ which produces dreams
→ while we are dreaming,	→ must be able to work
→ especially a problem	→ on problems

→ and to solve them.	→ It is
→ It is evidently wrong	→ figuratively accurate
→ to think	→ to speak
→ of our conscious	→ of the "threshold"
→ and our subconscious	→ between the conscious
→ functioning	→ and the subconscious mind,
→ as two mental activities	→ for every thought
→ which are	→ can easily lapse
→ eternally divided.	→ from the conscious
→ It is much better	→ to the subconscious,
→ to think of them	→ and we are sometimes able
→ as two rooms	→ to draw a thought
→ whose separating wall	→ from the subconscious
→ is flexible	→ over this threshold
→ and easily removable.	→ into the conscious mind.

### *Phrase-Perception Exercise 17*

Continue as before.

→ Your eyes are muscles,	→ of those muscles
→ and correct use	→ cannot injure them.

→ If you make sure	→ It is generally agreed
→ to do	→ that 75 to 100 watts
→ most of your reading	→ of electricity,
→ in daylight,	→ in a shaded lamp—
→ or in artificial light	→ preferably
→ so placed	→ from a frosted bulb—
→ that no shadow falls	→ coming over
→ on the page,	→ your left shoulder,
→ and of sufficient strength	→ produces ideal,
→ so that the act	→ shadowless reading
→ of reading	→ conditions.
→ causes no strain,	→ Try to avoid doing
→ you can,	→ any considerable amount
→ under these	→ of reading
→ ideal conditions,	→ in a moving train,
→ go on reading	→ especially at night.
→ for hours	→ Avoid also
→ without feeling	→ doing any great amount
→ the slightest fatigue.	→ of reading

- |                          |                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| → by means of            | → than 75 watts.            |
| → overhead lights        | → The important things are: |
| → in your home;          | → a sufficient intensity    |
| → use a lamp,            | → of light                  |
| → placed to your left    | → for your type of eyes,    |
| → whenever practicable,  | → and the complete absence  |
| → and see that the bulbs | → of shadows.               |
| → are no weaker          |                             |

### *Phrase-Perception Exercise 18*

Continue as before.

- |                          |                               |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| → You are beginning      | → In playing the violin,      |
| → to force your eyes     | → the apparently comfortable, |
| → to adjust to new       | → but completely incorrect,   |
| → and better conditions. | → thing                       |
| → There are analogies    | → is to swing out             |
| → in the practice        | → the right elbow.            |
| → of almost any          | → Beginners                   |
| → other skill            | → go through torture          |
| → you can think of.      | → trying to keep              |

→	their elbow	→	to hit the shuttlecock
→	at their side;	→	by swinging
→	but they must,	→	the arm.
→	if they ever wish	→	The need
→	to perform efficiently.	→	to move the wrist,
→	Finally,	→	rather than the arm,
→	when the elbow learns	→	at first
→	to stay	→	seems cruel
→	where it belongs	→	and dismaying,
→	without	→	until it becomes apparent
→	a conscious command	→	to the player
→	from the mind	→	that he'll never win
→	to that effect,	→	a game
→	the pupil's playing	→	by lunging at the bird.
→	begins to show	→	And so
→	improvement.	→	with reading.
→	In badminton	→	It is easy
→	the tendency is	→	to make short,
→	for a beginner	→	frequent sweeps,

- |   |                       |   |                 |
|---|-----------------------|---|-----------------|
| → | to pick up            | → | you cannot hope |
| → | only one or two words | → | to read         |
| → | at a time;            | → | either rapidly  |
| → | but until you conquer | → | or efficiently. |
- these self-indulgent habits,

Now that you are gathering momentum in your training for instantaneous perception, you are ready to move ahead into training for speedier comprehension, for developing intellectual habits that will make your potential, forced, reading rate become your natural, habitual, cruising speed.

Let me remind you, before you begin the next very important chapter, that best results will be obtained if you continue, daily, your training in perception, both in digits and in phrases.



## CHAPTER V

# Speeding up Your Comprehension

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### *Preview*

#### *You will learn:*

- How to read for main ideas.
- How to eliminate from your reading habits any excessive regard for minor details.
- How to cruise through a selection at a good rate looking for the author's main points.

IN CHAPTER V, YOU START THAT CRUCIAL AND PRODUCTIVE PHASE OF YOUR TRAINING IN WHICH YOU LEARN TO REACT FASTER TO A PAGE OF PRINT. YOU WILL BEGIN TO GIVE UP YOUR NORMAL, SLOW RATE OF READING, AND WILL MAKE A GOOD START AT ACHIEVING COMFORT AND ASSURANCE WHILE CRUISING ALONG AT A RAPID CLIP.

## 1. The Details Will Take Care of Themselves

Your work in this chapter is crucial—you have been prepared for it psychologically and visually by your understanding of, and partial practice on, material in all preceding chapters; and if you can adjust, in the period of time it will take you to cover this chapter, to a successful breaking of your speed barrier, then you will be able to forge right ahead with training that will make your potential, forced rate a *permanent, natural, habitual, full-comprehension* rate.

In your work on this chapter you are going to discover whether you can understand material at a rate substantially faster than the normal, ordinary, rate you established from the test on page 13.

To start your training, recall that most adults (including, perhaps, yourself) read at a speed much lower than their rate of understanding. In part, the untrained reader's slowness is caused by narrow fixations, by word-by-word absorption, and by delay between perception and interpretation, as well as by certain other habits which will be dealt with in chapter VI (vocalization, lip movements, excessive auditory responses, unnecessary regressions, etc.). But in large part, also, the average reader goes far, far slower than he has to for full comprehension.

Training in the previous chapter has begun a systematic speeding up of your perception and interpretation; training in this chapter, and in chapters VII and XI, will attempt to eliminate your tendency to read more slowly than you are able to comprehend.

Actually, to phrase our goal more logically, this training will aim to increase the *speed of your comprehension*. We shall rely, throughout, on the simple and obvious principle that the quicker you understand, the quicker you can read. You have already begun to remove any *visual* bars to quick comprehension; now you will start removing any *psychological* bars.

Your work in this chapter, then, aims to train you to get into your reading, get the ideas quickly and correctly, and (if I may

lapse into conventional vulgarity for just a moment in order to get my point across with maximum impact) *get the hell out.*

In order to do this, you must submit, emotionally as well as intellectually, to this principle: *if you read for main ideas, the details will take care of themselves.*

You may be reluctant to accept this principle. You may be conditioned, because of previous experiences and training, or because of the type of professional reading you now do (proof-reading, editing, reading of technical material such as contracts, legal briefs, estimates, specifications, medical or dental literature, etc.) to consider all details of supreme importance. It is possible that your comprehension of reading matter may be perfect, down to the last minor detail, as a result of the careful reading you do—and you may be emotionally opposed (whether consciously or unconsciously is of no importance) to reading for main ideas only.

Or you may be a perfectionist in your daily life, a stickler for details, a person who prefers to be slow but sure.

In short, it may hurt you, because it runs so counter to ingrained habits and patterns of general as well as reading attitudes, to try to absorb swiftly, cruising along at a good clip with speedy comprehension of the main ideas.

I wish only to point out that you can't have your cake and eat it too.

If you wish to be a rapid, efficient reader, you must give up your excessive attention to details, your superfluous regard for minor points, and be willing to develop a mind-set that concentrates on main elements.

In your professional capacity you may read with the proper slowness and meticulousness that your job requires. But the efficient reader has a variety of speeds, a diversity of approaches to material, depending on the purpose for which he reads and on the type of material he is reading.

In work that requires infinite, close scrutiny, that is what he gives it.

In general reading for information, relaxation, and entertainment, he reads swiftly for main ideas, knowing that the details will take care of themselves.

As an efficient reader, he chooses the tool best suited to the reading task. It would be a poor carpenter, for example, who relied on a surgical scalpel to do all the cutting of lumber which

his job requires. (Indeed, it would be a poor surgeon who used only one scalpel no matter what type of tissue he was cutting.) And so it is a poor reader who reads everything the same way, with the same careful attention to details. The good reader has a large supply of different tools and uses that one which will best do the job. He can read slowly when the job requires it; that is, when the details are of special importance or when he wants to savor the emotional impact of every word. But he can read like the wind when he wants the ideas of a selection, and wants them quickly.

Sometimes, also (and this may at first sound paradoxical), the reader who pays excessive attention to details loses a lot of the impact of the main theme of a piece—so that slow, finicky reading may actually not result in as good comprehension as one would logically suppose.

So you must be willing, if the training in this chapter is to show any effect on you, to accept the validity of the principle that if you read for main ideas the details will take care of themselves.

## 2. Reading for Main Ideas

You will begin your training very shortly—but, as in previous exercises, it is important that you understand the technique thoroughly and that you follow that technique exactly as directed.

If you do, the training will have the proper and maximum effect that it can have on a person of your potential comprehension speed. When the training has that proper and maximum effect, you will, to put it quite simply, become an entirely different reader from what you are today. Reading will be a pleasurable, fast, comfortable, and satisfying activity—as any complex activity becomes when performed at maximum efficiency.

I am going to set down the rules carefully and most clearly. Make sure you understand them, and then make sure that you apply them when you start your training in rapid comprehension.

*Rule 1.* Do not aim to go as fast as is humanly possible—such a childish and impatient rush to achieve in a few minutes a goal that normally requires many weeks or months will only fatigue you and result in very great or even total comprehension loss.

*Rule 2. Do not pay any attention to fixations or eye movements—think only of understanding an author's main ideas in a satisfyingly rapid manner.*

*Rule 3. Feel that you are going a little faster (just a little) than you usually do. Jump into a piece, look for and follow the author's main ideas (do not worry about the minor points), and finish without wasting time.*

*Rule 4. If you happen to lose a word, a phrase, or a minor point here or there, do not regress—keep reading for the main ideas.*

*Rule 5. Absorb the thoughts quickly, but don't rush. Rushing produces tension, and tension inhibits, rather than aids, quick comprehension.*

*Rule 6. In a sense, you can "read" as quickly as you're able to turn pages—but you're not really reading unless you follow, with understanding, the gist of what an author is saying. So read quickly enough to realize you're getting the author's thoughts rapidly, but not so quickly that you feel panic or become confused, or lose all comprehension.*

*Rule 7. Do not worry about auditory responses; the more conscious you are of inner speech, the more inner speech you'll have. Think only of the main ideas—the more involved you become in main ideas, and the less you concentrate on minor points, the better the chances are that inner speech will be reduced.*

These are the seven general principles for you to follow in your training. Specific rules applying directly to the material that will be presented will be offered at the proper place.

### 3. Getting the Author's Point

With the visual and technical improvement which your practice on previous exercises is beginning to make in your habitual responses to the reading act, you are ready now to learn to attack a reading selection in a new, efficient, and rapid manner.

Previous pages in this chapter have aimed to convince you of the value of reading a piece with one central aim: getting the main thoughts and getting them quickly. Let us see how successfully you can put that principle into operation.

## Comprehension Exercise 1

### Reading for the Author's Point

I'm going to ask you to warm up with a short selection by Sylvia F. Porter, financial expert for the *New York Post*. The writing is simple and clear and can be read rapidly if you look for the main thought and do not get bogged down in the various statistics that Miss Porter will offer.

The selection will explain why more people do not invest their surplus capital in stocks. Read with a mind-set to discover, quickly and without wasting time on details, what that reason is. Remember, no panicky rushing, no zooming through the print at such a breakneck speed that you won't understand what the author is trying to communicate to you. On the other hand, try to understand the point of the piece quickly, with no lost time or motion.

Later on I'll ask you to time yourself as you read in order to get a word-per-minute rate and thus have an objective report on your reading speed—but for the moment we'll be less interested in your rate than in two other factors: (1) Can you read with the single-minded aim of getting the main thought? (2) Can you do this efficiently and rapidly?

### OWNING STOCKS

by Sylvia F. Porter<sup>1</sup>

If your income is more than \$3,000 a year and you have some money left over for savings, why aren't you putting part of this hard-earned, extra cash into stocks? I'll tell you two main reasons why:

You don't know much about "Wall Street," you may not even be quite sure what a stock is, and so you're not fiddling around.

Or you think stocks aren't safe and you're against taking any unnecessary risks with these precious dollars of yours.

If your income is more than \$5,000 a year and you have some of your accumulated cash in Government savings bonds, some

<sup>1</sup> From the *New York Post*. Reprinted with permission of the author. Miss Porter is Financial Editor of the *Post* and the author, with J. K. Lasser, of *How to Live Within Your Income*.

in insurance and some in the bank, why aren't you diversifying your assets a bit more and holding a few stocks too? I'll tell you again two main reasons why:

You're convinced you could be successful in the stock market only if you had an intimate knowledge of financial problems or if you had friends among the financial experts. You have neither.

Or you're old enough to recall the 1929 stock crash and to have developed a strong antagonism toward "Wall Street" which neither the stock brokers nor businessmen have tried or been able to overcome.

This isn't I pontificating on your assets and attitudes. What I have summarized here are the results of a survey just released by the Federal Reserve Board on how families with incomes of \$3,000-and-up invest their extra cash and why.

It makes me wince—the disclosures and implications here. For how many times have I heard bankers, businessmen, brokers denounce the policies of the Roosevelt and Truman Administrations as responsible for the relative unpopularity of Wall Street!

Fiddlesticks. What this survey shows is that Wall Street is still unpopular among the great majority because Wall Street itself has done a fantastically bad job of explaining itself, its operations, and its purposes to that vast majority.

How often have I heard supposedly informed industrialists condemn our tax laws or Government regulations as responsible for the fact they can't issue new stocks as easily as they once could and thus can't raise new money through the stock market?

Poppycock. What this study reveals is that overwhelming numbers of Americans are simply afraid to put their savings in stocks. They're talking "safety."

And how many times have I read speeches by leading businessmen and financiers appealing to stockholders to vote against Administration policies, rise up against the welfare state philosophy.

Futility as of now. For what these findings emphasize is that the appeal is touching only a tiny fraction of our voting population. Stock ownership as a percentage of our total population is now at the lowest level in over a quarter-century.

Here are some of the startling facts uncovered for the Reserve Board by the University of Michigan Survey Research Center:

Only 4,000,000 families—8 per cent of the total—hold stocks of American corporations today.

Of this 8 per cent, half figure the value of their stocks at less

than \$1,000. Only 2 per cent estimate their holding as worth more than \$5,000. (That 2 per cent, of course, is in the highest income bracket.)

There is money around, plenty of it, but it's going into other things—savings bonds, insurance, bank accounts, real estate.

In the measured words of the Reserve: "Early in 1949 there was no lack of funds potentially available for consumer investment in corporate equities either among individuals who owned no corporate stock at that time or among those who were already participating directly . . ."

Why, then, was this money not going into stocks? Because 28 per cent felt that this market was "not safe" and another 34 per cent answered, they were "not familiar with" this market. Only 8 per cent gave any positive reason for stock ownership. The remaining, overwhelming 92 per cent either were openly against or were indifferent.

If Wall Street wants to bring us into the stock market, let its representatives stop grumbling about taxes and rules and the like—and get out and explain stocks to that 34 per cent who are "not familiar with" securities. If industry wants a revived market so it can sell more new issues, let its representatives give an acceptable answer to that 28 per cent who think stocks are "not safe."

But I'll make a bet. I'll wager only a handful among businessmen and financiers will even bother about this vital message to them—unless or until they read this.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

1. Did you read this according to instructions and with a feeling that your comprehension was a bit speedier than usual?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which of the following statements, in your opinion, most closely approximates the main idea of the selection? (Check one.)

a. If you make more than \$3,000 a year, you ought to buy some stocks.

b. The stock market is safer than it used to be.

c. Wall Street is unpopular because of administration policies of the Roosevelt and Truman administrations.

d. Only 8 per cent of American families own stocks.

e. Less money is being invested in stocks than is available for such purposes because Wall Street has done a bad job of ex-



plaining its operations and purposes to the majority of Americans.

f. We must do something about making stocks safer if we wish to attract the average person into the market.

*Note carefully these possibilities:*

1. If you had a feeling that you were going along at a good clip, understanding the point Miss Porter was making; and if you readily checked answer *e* in the choices above, then the conditions are excellent, as of now, that training in this chapter can produce spectacular results for you, both as to speed and comprehension.

2. If you went as slowly as usual (I'll rely on your subjective reactions at this point), but still saw the main point of Miss Porter's argument, then you may have to adjust more successfully to faster comprehension before this training can show results. But don't despair—we are just starting.

3. If you read rapidly, but missed the point, re-read the selection, now that you know the central thought, and try to understand how everything in the piece is intended to get that thought across to you.

In all probability, possibility 1 or 2 applies to your reading; but if possibility 3 is true, then the training in this chapter will be of the utmost value—for you will actually learn to push through the details and get to the meat of an author's ideas. The ability to do this is a prime requisite for efficient reading, and, once achieved, it is an ability that can have a radical effect on your speed. And it is an ability that can be learned through practice, through trial and error, so that every piece you read in this chapter will add to your skill in understanding what you read.

### *Comprehension Exercise 2*

Here, for further warm-up, is another piece by Sylvia Porter. Again there will be some statistics and a wealth of detail—push through these quickly, efficiently, and look for her main thought, namely: a suggested improvement in the bond-cashing procedure of the United States government.

## U. S. BOND CASHING CLUMSY, WASTEFUL <sup>2</sup>

by Sylvia F. Porter

It just won't do—the system we're using today to cash in matured U. S. savings bonds. It's too clumsy, too wasteful, too irritating, too tied up in red tape.

We're getting by with the method now only because those of us who have owned those \$25 and \$50 Government savings bonds for a full ten years and thus are now turning them in for cash are still relatively limited.

We're numbered in the hundreds of thousands; our total redemptions this year will reach "only" a billion dollars.

But every month, we move closer to the day when the trickle of cash-ins will become a flood.

Pretty soon, there will be millions of us who will have held the little "E" bonds for a 10-year period and will be asking \$25 back for every \$18.75 we put up.

The year after next, maturing bonds will soar above the four billion mark—and in every city, town and hamlet there will be families with bonds to redeem.

In 1953 alone, the redemptions will climb about five billions; in 1954, above six billions.

And so it'll go year after year, for more than 75,000,000 of us bought savings bonds during the defense and war years. Of the 88 billions sold to date, more than 56 billions are still outstanding.

These impressive totals make it overwhelmingly clear that a better system of redemption and reinvestment must be devised.

Since the "baby bond" days of the '30s, I've been saving via U. S. securities. I liked the idea of putting my savings in Government bonds from the start. Recognizing my own weaknesses, I approved—for myself—the discipline of week-to-week investments.

Thus, I have bonds coming due quite regularly now and I'm a guinea pig for the redemption-reinvestment process. It won't do.

Here's a case history. In March, 1940, I bought one \$18.75 and one \$37.50 bond. Last week, I remembered that and so:

(1) I went to my safe deposit box company, identified myself, got my box, took out my two matured bonds, put them in my purse.

<sup>2</sup> From the *New York Post*. Reprinted with permission of the author.

The company is conveniently located near my office; the watchmen know me well and therefore, cut the red tape to a minimum. Still, time consumed in the operation: about 25 minutes.

(2) I then walked to the local bank, took out my bonds, identified myself and my mission, signed my name and address on the back of each bond, gave them to an officer for stamping and payment.

The bank is also conveniently located near my office; the officer also knows me well and therefore slashed the red tape. (The banks perform this service as a courtesy to the Government and us, incidentally). Time consumed by both of us: about 20 minutes.

(3) When I handed over my bonds, the officer asked "Do you want cash for these?" I hesitated. My two bonds were worth \$75; I thought of a dozen things I wanted to do with the money. But my program involves using savings bonds as an "annuity." So—reluctantly, I'll admit—I said, "put the \$75 into another bond."

(4) More rigmarole, a purchase paper to fill out, name and address again. Time consumed on this: about 15 minutes.

It's tolerable, I suppose, as of now—simply because the big cash-ins are still ahead. But it won't be tolerable later.

It's too clumsy: add up the time I, the bondholder, spent and the time the bank officer spent on cashing \$75 of bonds.

It's too wasteful: consider the expensive process of exchanging one piece of paper for another.

It's too irritating: after a lunch-hour used that way, enthusiasm for \$25 and \$50 bonds can be decidedly dampened.

It's too tied up in red tape: the method of getting the money and reinvesting it is unnecessarily complicated.

What's a solution? One, I think, would simply allow those who wish, to continue holding the same bonds after maturity and to continue collecting interest until they're finally set to cash in.

If you wanted your \$25 on the bond's due date, fine; you could get it. If you wanted to maintain the investment, fine; you could do that, too, and skip the reinvestment process.

That would be easy, efficient and inexpensive—far superior to today's system. I bet we come to it.

## COMPREHENSION TEST

1. Did you read this according to instructions and with a feeling that your comprehension was a bit speedier than usual?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which of the following statements, in your opinion, most closely approximates the main idea of the selection? (Check one.)

*a.* The present system of cashing in old bonds and buying new ones is clumsy and wasteful; bonds should go on drawing interest beyond the maturity date.

*b.* Bonds should not be cashed by banks—it takes up too much of their time.

*c.* We'll be cashing in more and more bonds as more and more mature—so new bonds should be issued automatically, by the government, for those that come due.

*d.* It is so difficult to cash in a bond that it is better to hold on to it, even though no further interest accumulates.

*e.* New bonds should run for longer than ten-year periods.

The correct answer, of course, is choice *a*. If you realized this at once and felt an increased competence in pushing through to the main idea as you read, then you can begin to understand the value of reading efficiently for the main idea.

### *Comprehension Exercise 3*

Now, for still further warm-up, try a shorter selection. Follow the same procedure as in exercises 1 and 2, but this time you will have to find the main thought without any previous briefing.

#### FRIED FOODS <sup>3</sup>

by Irving S. Cutter, M.D.

Fried foods have long been frowned upon. Nevertheless the skillet is about our handiest and most useful piece of kitchen equipment. Stalwart lumberjacks and others engaged in active labor requiring 4,000 calories per day or more will take approximately one-third of their rations prepared in this fashion. Meats,

\* From *Your Life*. Reprinted with permission.

eggs, and French toast cooked in this way are served in millions of homes daily. Apparently the consumers are not beset with more signs of indigestion than afflict those who insist upon broiling, roasting, or boiling. Some years ago one of our most eminent physiologists investigated the digestibility of fried potatoes. He found that the pan variety was more easily broken down for assimilation than when deep fat was employed. The latter, however, dissolved within the alimentary tract more readily than the boiled type. Furthermore, he learned, by watching the progress of the contents of the stomach by means of the fluoroscope, that fat actually accelerated the rate of digestion. Now all this is quite in contrast with "authority." Volumes have been written on nutrition and everywhere the dictum has been accepted—no fried edibles of any sort for children. A few will go so far as to forbid this style of cooking wholly. Now and then an expert will be bold enough to admit that he uses them himself, the absence of discomfort being explained on the ground that he possesses a powerful gastric apparatus. We can of course sizzle perfectly good articles to death so that they will be leathery and tough. But thorough heating, in the presence of shortening, is not the awful crime that it has been labeled. Such dishes stimulate rather than retard contractions of the gall bladder. Thus it is that bile mixes with the nutriment shortly after it leaves the stomach. We don't need to allow our foodstuffs to become oil soaked, but other than that there seems to be no basis for the widely heralded prohibition against this method. But notions become fixed. The first condemnation probably arose because an "oracle" suffered from dyspepsia which he ascribed to some fried item on the menu. The theory spread. Others agreed with him and after a time the doctrine became incorporated in our textbooks. The belief is now tradition rather than proved fact. It should have been refuted long since as experience has demonstrated its falsity.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

1. Did you read this according to instructions and with a feeling that your comprehension was a bit speedier than usual?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which of the following statements, in your opinion, most closely approximates the main idea of the selection? (Check one.)

- a. More Americans eat fried foods than any other kinds.
- b. It is not true that frying foods makes them indigestible.
- c. Children should not eat fried foods.

*Correct answer: b.*

### *Comprehension Exercise 4*

And still more warm-up. Push through this short selection for the main point—get it quickly, efficiently, and without waste of time or motion.

#### YOUR DIARY <sup>4</sup>

Your diary, if you keep the right kind, may be a lifesaver if you turn it over to your doctor when illness strikes. He isn't interested in what Jim said under the moon, but he would like to know details of your past that can give him important information on your health history. This recommendation comes from Dr. H. E. Robertson of the Mayo Foundation. Did you turn yellow after taking that worm medicine a few years ago? There may be a clue to liver injury there. How often have those troublesome stomach-aches been occurring—how many days between them? How many colds do you have a year? Were you bedridden for a day or so with a mysterious fever—and, if so, what kind of activities had you been engaging in previously? When was the last time you called a doctor and for what? This unromantic information can be very helpful indeed when you need a doctor's services.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

1. Did you read this according to instructions and with a feeling that your comprehension was a bit speedier than usual?

YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

2. Which of the following statements, in your opinion, most closely approximates the main idea of the selection? (Check one.)

- a. People should keep diaries if they wish to stay healthy.
- b. Your diary will save your doctor time when he treats you.

<sup>4</sup> From *Your Life*. Reprinted with permission.

c. An account of previous illnesses and physical aspects will help the doctor to diagnose and treat your ailments more efficiently.

*Correct answer: c.*

How are you doing? Do you begin to see how you can gain speed and assurance as you aim to find the gist of a selection with no loss of time, with no dawdling or minute examination of details?

Continue your practice now on the next three short selections, looking in each case for the main idea. The more you practice the more likely will speedy comprehension become natural, comfortable, and habitual.

### *Comprehension Exercise 5*

#### THE BEST LEARNING <sup>5</sup>

by Cyril O. Houle

The best learning is that which occurs in adulthood. Our psychologists have demonstrated fairly conclusively that, for most people, the ability to learn is at its peak in the years from eighteen to forty-five. There is evidence to show that, even after forty-five, learning power remains high if it is exercised carefully and systematically. Adults can learn better than children; maturity is not a bar but an incentive to the person who wishes to develop his own potentialities. It is significant to recall, among other things, that virtually all the really great teachers, both religious and secular, have taught adults, not children. Naturally, the elementary school and the high school should do something more than keep children warm and dry. They can do little more, however, than prepare their pupils for the real education which maturity will bring.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Did you get the point? Check the statement which best summarizes the gist of the paragraph:

<sup>5</sup> From *Classroom Techniques in Improving Reading*, compiled and edited by William S. Gray, University of Chicago Press, Chicago. Reprinted with permission.

- a. Adults cannot learn properly unless adequately prepared in childhood.
- b. Adults are better learners than children.
- c. The most famous teachers have always taught adults.

*Correct answer: b.*

### *Comprehension Exercise 6*

#### THE STUTTERER <sup>6</sup>

The stutterer is often an enigma, both to himself and to others, because of the seeming inconsistency of his speech disorder. He can sing without difficulty; he has periods of little or no speech trouble; he may be able to take part in a play before a large audience without stuttering although later, off stage, he may scarcely be able to talk at all. These very inconsistencies, however, point to one obvious conclusion in regard to stuttering: that it is a disorder in which emotional factors play a role of paramount importance.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Did you get the point? Then check the conclusion pointed to by the inconsistent and enigmatic behavior of the stutterer.

- a. Stuttering is largely influenced by emotional factors.
- b. A stutterer doesn't *have* to stutter.
- c. He can speak better when he has memorized the words he uses.

*Correct answer: a.*

### *Comprehension Exercise 7*

#### NATURE AND WARFARE <sup>7</sup>

by Fairfield Osborn

It may be pointed out that warfare as practiced by man has

<sup>6</sup> From *Talk*, published by the National Hospital for Speech Disorders, New York. Reprinted with permission.

<sup>7</sup> From *Our Plundered Planet*, Little, Brown and Co., Boston. Reprinted with permission.



no parallel in nature. This is to say that within the more highly developed animal populations of this earth there is not now nor has there ever been similar destruction within a species itself. In fact, one has to go to the lowliest forms of animal life, such as certain kinds of ants, to find anything comparable to human warfare. It is a curious fact that mankind appears to justify the killing of his own kind by assuming that it is a "law of nature." There are a lot of current misconceptions about the laws of nature, of which this is one of the most erroneous and fateful. Political ideologies have been based upon it with results that have come near to destroying human civilization. The theory that war is a biological necessity, that it is nature's method of controlling population and assuring the survival of the strong and the elimination of the weak, is inaccurate and insupportable. Within the last century, when wars have been common all over the world, the human population of the earth has almost doubled.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Did you get the point? Then check the statement that most closely paraphrases the main idea of the paragraph.

- a. None of the lower animals, except ants, practice warfare upon their own species.
- b. Warfare is not a "law of nature."
- c. Warfare does not keep human population in check.

*Correct answer: b.*

#### 4. How Faster Comprehension Strengthens Good Reading Habits

The seven main-point exercises you have just practiced have been intended, in part, as warm-ups, and, in part, as proof that you can go faster without losing any of the meat of an author's writing. If you feel that you cruised along at a slightly faster rate than you usually do, then you have taken the first important step toward rapid, efficient reading. And if you are willing to approach all reading of a general nature with a mind set to determine the

*main thoughts*, and hang the details, then you have taken the second important step toward efficient, rapid reading.

Poor readers dawdle over their reading. If you consciously force yourself to cruise along steadily and efficiently, pursuing the trend of the author's thinking in a determined effort to find his main ideas quickly, you automatically inhibit dawdling. Poor readers read *words*—not only that, but they faithfully and stubbornly read *every single word* on a page, instead of judiciously skipping unimportant prepositions, articles, pronouns, conjunctions. If you cruise along rapidly, you force your mind to absorb phrases and ideas and to skip anything that is not critically important.

In order to speed up, you must decrease the number of fixations. You cannot go fast making five or six fixations on a four-inch line. And you must keep your lips and vocal chords motionless, for you haven't time to pronounce individual words. You cannot, of course, regress when you move along quickly; the two activities are mutually exclusive.

If you read slowly, you tend to "hear" the words in front of you, even though you do not actually articulate them. If you move ahead quickly looking for the main thoughts, you make conditions very favorable for turning audition into visualization, for reducing "inner speech."

## 5. The Theory of Rapid Reading

If we summed up, briefly, the theory of your training for faster, more efficient reading, we might divide it into six factors, as follows:

1. Quicker interpretation of visual stimuli through digit and phrase training.
2. Elimination of such bars to natural speed as vocalization, regressions, lip movements, and other *motor* responses (see chapter VI).
3. Reduction, through more active comprehension and concentration, of "inner speech" (chapter VI).
4. Development of intellectual habits of brushing away non-essential words and details to get the significant thoughts quickly and correctly.

5. Quicker mental absorption of ideas through trained speeding up.

6. The development of a *larger reading vocabulary*, so that no single word is likely to provide a bar to quick, effortless comprehension (chapter VIII).

## 6. Keeping a Graph of Your Progress

You are ready, now, to time yourself on the next reading selections in order to get an objective report on what is happening to your speed.

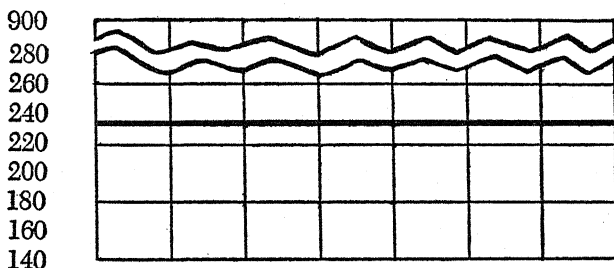
Turn to page 13, where you have recorded your ordinary speed in words per minute, and copy that figure here:

ORDINARY SPEED FROM INITIAL TEST: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

Now locate your ordinary speed on the graph on page 13 and draw a straight line at this point, parallel to line AB, so that you will have a continuous basis for comparison with your rate of reading for the eight selections in this chapter.

If, for example, you read the initial selection (the original J. Donald Adams piece) at 232 words per minute, you would locate your point between 220 and 240 and draw a straight line, as follows:

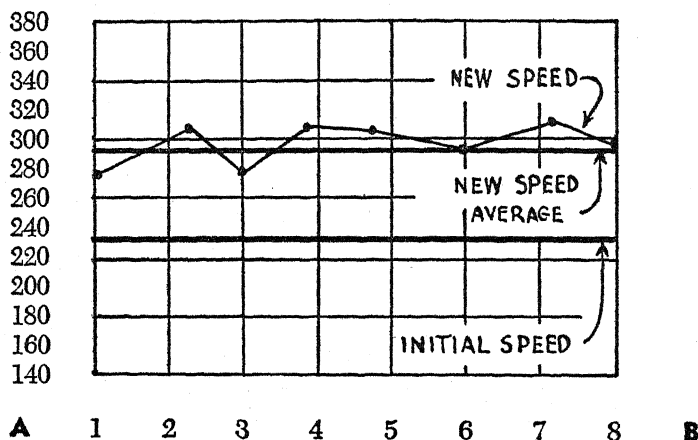
W.P.M.



**A    1    2    3    4    5    6    7    8    B**

At the end of each of the timed selections on which you will work in this chapter, you will be able to compute your speed in words per minute. Plot each speed on the graph on page 175, and connect the points by straight lines. When you have finished the final selection, add your varying speeds, divide by eight to

obtain an average speed, and draw another straight line similar to the one indicating your ordinary speed. When you have finished your training in this chapter, your graph may possibly look something like the following:



Keeping a careful record of your progress is one of the best incentives, in self-training, to maintaining your enthusiasm at a high pitch and your effort at a maximum. Such a record will tell you, at a glance, how well you are doing, how much success attends your efforts.

## 7. Spaced Learning

Do not attempt to cover all eight selections in this chapter in one training session.

To make this point quite clear, let me quote from Dr. Donald A. Laird, the noted psychologist: \*

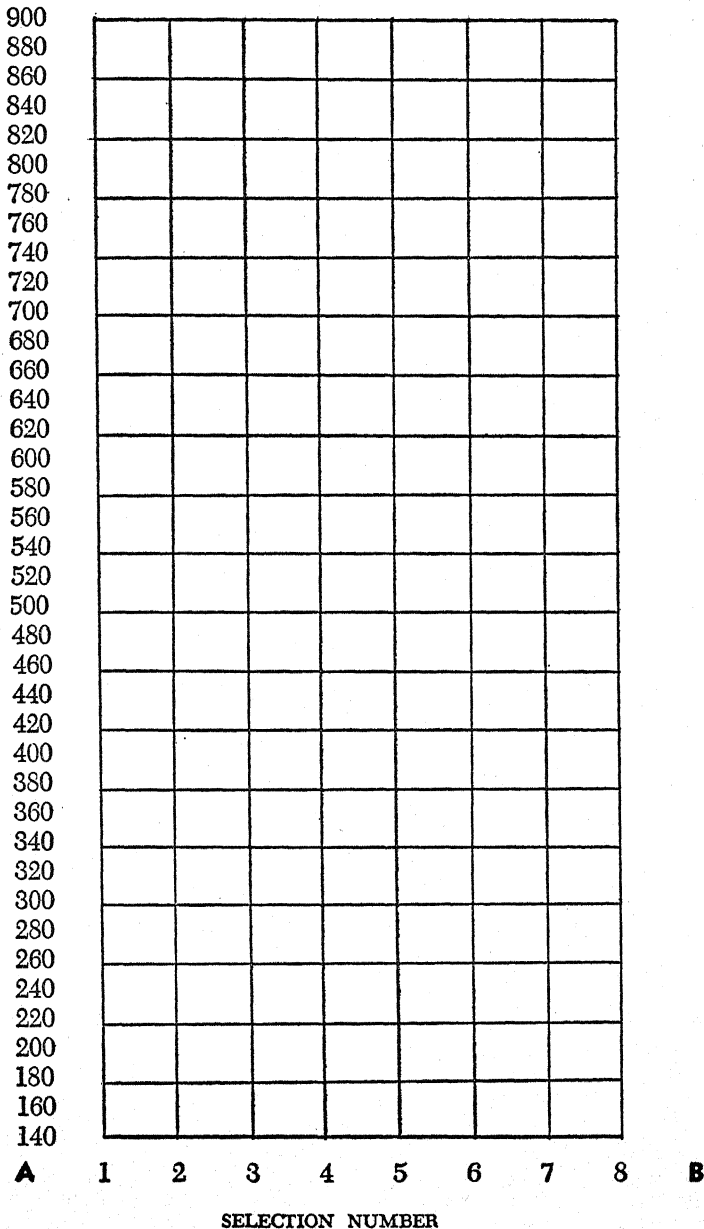
... Spare-time learning is especially efficient since there is time for it to soak in between learning periods. When learning complex things, there is an extra advantage in taking breathing spells. When beginning something new it also speeds up learning to have breathers. Most eager beginners push themselves too long at a time. Such crowded study or practice produces fatigue or boredom which hinders learning.

\* From *Your Life*, May, 1950. Reprinted with permission.

## PROGRESS GRAPH I

(Plot ordinary speed, speed on each selection, and average speed on all eight selections.)

**W.P.M.**



You can't gain wisdom quickly, but you can gain wisdom steadily by easy stages.

Instead of practicing at the typewriter, or piano, or behind the steering wheel, for two solid hours, practice only one hour. Then take a breather before doing the second hour of practice or study. You will be fresher when you start the second lap. Such spaced practice or study is better for learning than is continuous practice of the same total length.

Spaced practice not only eliminates fatigue and boredom, but also some maturation of the nerve connections which have been exercised seems to take place during the space between practice periods. Whatever the reason, however, distributed practice is better than continuous practice. Long practice periods can be safely used only after one has acquired considerable skill.

The most efficient distribution of practice or study sessions varies with the kind of material being learned. Each person has to find the best distribution of practice that fits him and his task. Follow these two guides in spacing your learning periods:

1. Each practice should be long enough to warm you up and to allow the peak of your present skill to be reached.
2. It should be halted when fatigue, boredom, errors, or slowness appear.

I would suggest, for best results, that you cover the eight selections that follow in two, three, or four separated sessions, depending on your capacity and your progress.

## 8. Timing Your Reading

A stop watch will, of course, be ideal for timing the selections you will read in the three chapters on rapid comprehension. If you have such a device, you need merely start it when you begin to read, stop it at the end of a selection, and then read your time accurately.

If you do not have a stop watch, work according to the following procedure:

1. First read the title of the selection.
2. Then note the time in writing (in the margin of the page, if you like) *to the next minute coming*. If it is, for example, almost 8:43, but not quite, write 8:43 in the margin.
3. Wait until the second hand of your watch shows *five seconds*

before 8:43. (You may have to adjust the hands so that the second hand reaches zero at approximately the same moment that the minute hand reaches a full number.)

4. When the second hand shows that it is five seconds short of 8:43, start reading at the first arrow.

5. Lose all consciousness of your watch, concentrating only on the reading and on speedy understanding of the main thoughts of a selection.

6. When you come to the terminating arrow, note the new time, subtract, and determine the time you took in minutes and seconds. (The five seconds are allowed for transfer from watch to page and back again.)

7. Note, at the bottom of the selection, the amount of time, in minutes and seconds, that you required.

8. Take the comprehension test that follows each selection.

9. Then determine your rate from the time chart that belongs to the selection you have read.

10. If you wish a most accurate figure for your rate of reading, interpolate between the lower and upper figures in the time chart. For example, if the first selection takes you exactly 1 minute, 45 seconds, take the rate for 1 minute, 50 seconds (339 words per minute), and for 1 minute, 40 seconds (372 words per minute), subtract (33), and add half the difference to the lower figure (339). Result: 355 words per minute. If this interpolation sounds too complicated, read the nearest rate for your time.

11. Plot your rate on the graph on page 175.

With a little practice, you will have no difficulty timing yourself accurately.

### *Timed Comprehension Exercise 1*

In the next selection, read with the new, efficient cruising speed you have developed in the earlier exercises of this chapter. Time yourself before you start, and note, at the end of each selection, the exact number of minutes and seconds consumed in the reading process. *Read, of course, for the main idea.*

## UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE<sup>9</sup>

by Paul Hunter

**Start timing**→The other night we dropped in at the drugstore which in our town serves as a place for philosophic discussion and general sounding off. We were just in time to hear our old friend, Elmer, disclose his views on unemployment insurance, particularly as it applies to the employees of the recently emptied arms plants.

Elmer is a man of substantial family who has worked for many years at the same job. His income, while not large, apparently meets his needs. All in all, he seems to be a fair sample of that fabulous American, the Average Guy.

Without realizing that he does so, Elmer often displays a knack of bringing the large-scale problems which agitate the country down to their actual application among people he knows. We think his views on unemployment insurance will bear repeating in his own pungent phraseology.

"As far as I can see," said Elmer, "some people are more entitled to unemployment insurance than others. For instance, I've got a sister-in-law who lives near one of the big aircraft plants. She never had to work, because my brother's got a steady job. But early in the war, when the plants were hollering for help, she figured she might as well make some extra money and at the same time do a little bit toward winning the war. Now she's been let out, and she has no intention of getting another job. She figures there won't be enough dough in it to make it worth while and, besides, her husband wants her home. She put in for unemployment insurance, though I always thought the purpose of it was to keep a fellow's family eating when he loses his job until he gets another one.

"There's two other fellows I know. Both had jobs in the same war plant. One is a guy who likes his nip and a good time. As long as the money was coming in, he spent it. I don't say he wasn't entitled to. He worked pretty hard and he's got a right to do as he pleases with his dough. The other fellow knew the job wasn't going to last forever. He socked his money away. When the Japs quit and the plant closed for reconversion, one guy was broke and the other had about \$1,400 to tide him over till the

<sup>9</sup> From *Liberty*. Reprinted with permission.



place opened again. The funny part about it, though, is that the fellow with the money meanwhile took a job greasing cars at the gas station for twenty-five bucks a week. The fellow who is broke passed up a couple of jobs because they paid less than he was getting at the war plant and spends his time beefing about how fifteen-a-week unemployment insurance ain't enough to live on. The way it works out is the fellow who saved his money and is keeping himself working will be paying part of the cost of the good times had by the fellow who didn't.

"Don't get me wrong, though. Unemployment insurance is a good thing and necessary. Fellows who are honestly out of work need it and are entitled to it. No guy's family should starve when he's out of a job. But I wish there was some way to keep folks from looking at it as a till to be tapped whenever they can get away with it. It's supposed to be a safeguard to rescue them when they really need it."

Elmer's comments seem to us to sum up accurately the wrongs and rights of the question. **←End timing**

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the *one* statement which most nearly expresses the central idea of the selection.

1. The entire unemployment insurance situation must be overhauled—it's rotten all the way through.
2. People who made plenty of money during the war should not be entitled to unemployment insurance.
3. Unemployment insurance is a good thing, but some people take advantage of it.
4. Unemployment insurance should be restricted to men and to those women who worked before the war.
5. Unemployment insurance should not be given to those people who expect to make as much money now as they did before the war.

*Key:* Subtract two from four and add one to determine the number of the correct answer.

## TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
40 sec.	930	1 min., 50 sec.	339
50 sec.	744	2 min.	310
1 min.	620	2 min., 15 sec.	276
1 min., 10 sec.	532	2 min., 30 sec.	248
1 min., 20 sec.	465	2 min., 45 sec.	226
1 min., 30 sec.	414	3 min.	107
1 min., 40 sec.	372		

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.  
Plot this rate on your progress graph.

If you respond to this training as do my students in the Adult Reading Laboratory, you will have noted an increase in speed over your initial rate of anywhere from 25 to 50 per cent. Perhaps you found it fairly comfortable to boost your speed to this point—if so, make no effort to exceed it at this time. Or possibly you found reading at this new rate the least bit uncomfortable—if so, you will discover that comfort will return as you continue your training.

### *Timed Comprehension Exercise 2*

Timing yourself, read the following selection, aiming for rapid comprehension of the main idea.

#### LIFE INSURANCE <sup>10</sup>

**Start timing**→“Why did you buy life insurance?” I asked him.

“Well,” he said, “it was because once I met a young person coming up the stairs of an apartment house with her arms full of packages, one of them dangling from a slender string. I didn’t think she’d mind, so I offered to help her. At the door of her apartment, I saw that she was quite pretty. She still is.

“Because late one night, while she and I were waiting at a dimly lighted railway station for the Owl to take me home, I said, ‘We

<sup>10</sup> An advertisement of the Travelers Insurance Co. Reprinted with permission.

could live on the money I'm spending for railroad fares! What do you say we try it? We did, and it worked.

"Because one day I was offered a job by another company, and when I told my boss, he promised me ten dollars more a week if I'd stay. When I told *her* of the boss's generosity, she said, 'What do you mean, generous? If he knew you were worth that much to him, he should have paid it to you before he had to.' So I quit and took the new job.

"Because one night she woke me up and said, 'I think I'd better go.' We went, and the last I saw of her that night, she was being trundled down a long corridor in a wheelchair, in spite of her protests that she could walk. When I saw her the next morning she was lying very still and white and with the sweetish smell of ether on her breath. A nurse came in and asked, 'Wouldn't you like to see him?' But I wasn't interested in babies just then—not even our own.

"Because one autumn evening, while we were driving leisurely along a country road, we came upon a small white cottage, its windows ablaze with the light of the setting sun. She said, 'What a place this would be for us!' Yes, what a place it has been for us!

"It's because of these memories, and many others that I wouldn't tell you and that wouldn't interest you even if I did, that I bought life insurance.

"And if the premiums could be paid in blood, instead of money, pernicious anemia would be a pleasure." **←End timing**

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Did you get the point? Then check the reason why the man in the story bought life insurance.

1. Because life insurance is a safe investment.
2. Because he wished to protect someone he loved very dearly.
3. Because his conscience would give him no rest if he didn't.

**Key:** Subtract three from five to determine the number of the correct answer.

## TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
30 sec.	752	1 min., 20 sec.	282
40 sec.	564	1 min., 30 sec.	250
50 sec.	450	1 min., 40 sec.	225
1 min.	376	1 min., 50 sec.	204
1 min., 10 sec.	324	2 min.	188

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

Plot this rate on your progress graph.

### *Timed Comprehension Exercise 3*

The following selection is a book review that appeared in the *New York Post*. Read it rapidly to determine whether the reviewer is recommending the book to the readers of his column.

#### NOT SO YOUNG OR SO GAY

by Sterling North <sup>11</sup>

WE FOLLOWED OUR HEARTS TO HOLLYWOOD

By Emily Kimbrough. Dodd, Mead. 210 pp. \$2.50.

**Start timing**→Girls, I'm just dying to tell you about the cutest book of the year. It's just too, too divine.

You remember Emily Kimbrough who is always being a little condescending to Cornelia Otis Skinner? And you remember when they were here at our club last year?

Well, the girls went to Hollywood this year to do two or three lines in the script of "Our Hearts Were Young and Gay." And they simply met everybody. I mean everybody who is anybody, if you know what I mean. Arthur Hornblow, Ginger Rogers, Charlie Coburn, Claudette Colbert, Bob Hope (who is Cornelia's dream man); Dinah Shore, Margot and slews of other fascinating people.

They went to the Brown Derby and they went to Mike Romanoff's, and they were massaged by Jim "with a tantalizing rhythm

<sup>11</sup> A book review in the *New York Post*. Reprinted with permission. Mr. North is former literary editor of the *Post*, currently literary editor of the *New York World-Telegram and Sun*. He is the author of the highly successful book, *So Dear to My Heart*.

... as irresistible as Fred Astaire's tapping feet." Emily can just make you feel his strong masculine fingers up and down your spine.

I know you'll simply adore Emily's new book because she did everything you've ever wanted to do, and I mean everything.

They just dropped forty years off their lives and went out to have themselves a time. They didn't pretend they weren't a wee mite jealous of each other. At least Emily was a wee mite jealous. But you know how it is, Girls, when your best friend is really somebody and you are really nobody, if you know what I mean.

And you really can't blame Emily for being something of a snob and a lion hunter. Because you only live once, and there isn't much point in talking to people who aren't somebody. And anybody might have been mistaken about Mr. Behrman, for instance. How did Emily know that the man next to her on the couch was the famous dramatist?

Just think, Girls, they went right onto the sets and talked to all the stars. And they were simply besieged by "grimy" autograph hunters. At least, Cornelia was. And they had the most divine suites; and you couldn't blame Emily for being a wee mite jealous about the balcony and the dressing room that Cornelia had and Emily didn't. I know just how Emily felt—balconies are just too romantic.

Well, Girls, I think we should have somebody read us parts of the book at our next club meeting so we can all pretend we read it. And then I think we should write Emily a few fan letters because her book is just too, too divine.

And I think anybody who is catty about this book is just showing lack of breeding and culture. Because there isn't a person in this book you wouldn't give your right little finger to have out to dinner. It's that sort of a book.

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Did you get the point? Then check Mr. North's reaction to the book:

1. He thinks it's one of the best books recently published.

2. He dislikes it enough to be sarcastic about it, aping the style of the authors.
3. He recommends it.
4. He finds it too difficult for general recommendation.

**Key:** Subtract five from seven to determine the number of the correct answer.

#### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
1 min.	452	1 min., 50 sec.	246
1 min., 10 sec.	390	2 min.	226
1 min., 20 sec.	339	2 min., 10 sec.	210
1 min., 30 sec.	302	2 min., 20 sec.	170
1 min., 40 sec.	271		

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.  
Plot this rate on your progress graph.

#### Timed Comprehension Exercise 4

The following selection is a movie review that appeared in *The New York Times*. Read rapidly for the main idea, determining whether the reviewer recommends the picture.

#### TOP MAN

by Bosley Crowther<sup>12</sup>

**Start timing**→Someone at Universal Studio has a mind like a steel trap; that's plain—as witness: a few months ago lots of people were exclaiming in wide-eyed surprise that a youngster named Donald O'Connor was a new Mickey Rooney in the rough. (Naturally, Donald's mannerisms had nothing to do with it—oh, no!) So what happens? Along comes Universal with a new picture—bang, just like that!—presenting Donald O'Connor in a typical Andy Hardy role. “Top Man” is its title. It came to Loew's State yesterday. Now, what do you think of that for imagination? Someone at Universal must be proud.

<sup>12</sup> A film review in *The New York Times*. Reprinted with permission. Mr. Crowther is the movie critic of the *Times*.

The picture? Well, let's not be too rigid. It's a flat imitation of a Hardy Family film, that's all, with Master O'Connor being more prodigious than Mr. Rooney, if such could be. It is he who takes over the running of his family when his father goes to war; it is he who rallies his junior classmates to work in an aircraft plant; it is he who does most of the acting in the factory's big morale show, and it is he who gets a glowing citation from the Navy Department, no less.

If you can stand youthful ostentation in its most callow and unabashed form—if you can endure a sassy youngster acting smart without a smidge of boyish charm—then possibly you will find Donald not wholly unbearable. Certainly you will find Susanna Foster attractive to eye and ear and the clowning of Peggy Ryan diverting without being fresh. But you will have to be able to take Donald before you can take this film. And even if you can do that, there's precious little else that goes with him. ← **End timing**

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Did you get the point? Then check the adjective which, after reading Mr. Crowther's review, you think would most aptly describe the film:

- |              |         |
|--------------|---------|
| 1. Excellent | 3. Fair |
| 2. Good      | 4. Poor |

*Key:* Subtract eight from twelve to determine the number of the correct answer.

#### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
30 sec.	552	1 min., 10 sec.	252
40 sec.	414	1 min., 20 sec.	207
50 sec.	330	1 min., 30 sec.	184
1 min.	276		

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.  
Plot this rate on your progress graph.

## Timed Comprehension Exercise 5

### IDEAS STILL PAY OFF <sup>13</sup>

by Hilliard H. Wolfe

**Start timing**→Comrade Stalin and his cohorts to the contrary, the United States is still the land of opportunity—the land where a man willing to think independently, to blaze a new trail, to stop playing “follow the leader” can gather in the rewards.

While most success stories deal with the struggles of a poor man to gain riches, there has just recently been concluded a success story with a different twist—that of a man already possessed of an ample share of worldly goods who refused to follow hackneyed formulas or let others do his thinking for him.

About two years ago Elliott White Springs, president of the world's largest cotton mills under one roof, wanted to get his company's trade-mark well and quickly known to the retail buying public. Advertising experts and agencies failed over a period of months to show Colonel Springs any campaign which he thought would turn the trick.

Late in 1947 an enterprising magazine space salesman came up with three pieces of art that set the campaign in motion. One picture, by Fritz Willis, showed a beautiful blonde and some autumn leaves, the wind whipping her skirt about her thighs. Another, by Simms Campbell, pictured a girl in full skating costume doing a figure eight. The third scene, by Frederick Smith, showed three girls in skating costumes behind the curtain at an ice show, waiting their turn and warming themselves by an oil stove. All three pieces of art had been used before editorially in a well-known magazine.

Under a “Be Protected” caption, President Springs wrote some snappy copy for the Willis art, which introduced new terminology to the world of advertising. Readers of the ad, which first appeared in May, 1948, were surprised to learn that Springmaid fabric “is now available to the false bottom and bust bucket business, and if you want protection from a sudden draft on a windy corner, look for the Springmaid label on the bottom of your trade-mark.”

Competitors in the industry, related manufacturers, advertis-

<sup>13</sup> From *Liberty*. Reprinted with permission.



ing agencies, magazines—all were drawn into the ensuing excitement. Elliott Springs was even accused of endangering the good will certain advertisers had spent years building up. Undisturbed, the textile genius used the Smith art to feature a fabric “available to the ham hamper and lung lifter business.”

And then the deluge. Many guardians of public morals attempted to find something indecent in the ads. (You don’t think they’re indecent, do you?) Several publications hailed the ads as vulgar, obscene, and in bad taste; and it looked as if Elliott Springs and the Springs Cotton Mills would have to withdraw with a red face.

Then the marines came over the hill as letters began pouring in from all over the world, praising the ads and damning their detractors. Most important, they demanded more ads of the same type. Two full-time secretaries had to be assigned to handle the avalanche of mail the ads produced, and they are still busy today, 18 months later.

And so the battle was won. His ads now accepted by the majority of consumer magazines, Elliott Springs went back to his first love, that of running his vast textile empire, and turned the advertising over to his agency and advertising manager.

Almost daily, corporation executives write to him for advice on how to run an advertising campaign, and he is invited to crown beauty queens and speak before well-known organizations all over the country.

So far, Elliott Springs has received over 50,000 letters as a result of his Springmaid advertising campaign. Springs’ fans want everything from autographed reprints of his ads to copies of his many books written about World War I.

Colonel Springs’ victory was made even sweeter when his ad of the three girls before the oil-stove was selected as one of the best national ads of 1948.

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. A cotton-mill executive, refusing to play “follow the leader,” blazes a successful new trail in advertising.

2. Indecent ads attract a lot of attention.
3. The U. S. is still a land of opportunity.
4. It is not only the poor man who can make a success.
5. Whenever anything new is thought of, most people will immediately object to it, write letters of complaint, and attempt in every way to avoid giving up the comfort of their old habits.

*Key:* Subtract five from five and add one to determine the number of the correct answer.

#### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
1 min.	725	2 min.	362
1 min., 15 sec.	580	2 min., 30 sec.	290
1 min., 30 sec.	484	3 min.	242
1 min., 45 sec.	416	3 min., 30 sec.	208

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.  
Plot this rate on your progress graph.

### *Timed Comprehension Exercise 6*

#### WHAT IF I DON'T GET MARRIED?

by Virginia Hurray <sup>14</sup>

**Start timing**→They tell me I may never marry. It's a matter of cold fact that women are outnumbering men and that there just aren't enough unmarried men today for all the eligible women.

At 27, I am amply forewarned by statistics that my dreams of marriage may never come true. Nevertheless, I can face the prospect of middle-aged and old maidenhood with something like indifference.

I'm glad to have been exposed to the statistics: it's good to know what the score is. But I am convinced that the statistics are being presented with too much gloom and foreboding.

The authors of articles on the man shortage (Have you noticed that they are invariably men?) are altogether too distressed and apprehensive about the unmarried female. They fear loneliness

<sup>14</sup> From *Look*. Reprinted with permission of the Cowles Syndicate. Miss Hurray is a feature writer for the Youngstown, Ohio, *Vindicator*.

and frustration among unclaimed women will lead to wholesale snatching of other women's husbands.

Rubbish, I say to these worries! They insult the integrity of women and belittle all the efforts that parents, pastors and teachers made in our childhood to fill us with the determination to lead moral and useful lives. They are based on the old Freudian idea that sex is the one all-important fact of life—an idea with which most psychiatrists today do not agree.

Frankly, like most other members of my sex, I hope to marry. But I am not interested in getting a husband by hook or crook. Neither are most of the single girls of my acquaintance.

To insinuate that all unmarried women of mature age are frustrated is grossly unfair. The dictionary says "frustrate" means "to disappoint; to render null or ineffectual; to prevent from attaining a purpose."

Let's look at the first meaning. The very articles that warn us of a man shortage protect us from disappointment. For if we know that not all of us can marry, the mateless future will be less of a disappointment.

In the second meaning of the word—"to render null or ineffectual"—I find real reason to rebel. I could cite here the names of many famous unmarried women in the arts, sciences and professions. No one can call *them* "null or ineffectual."

However, most of the eight million women who must remain single are, like myself, not unusual. Some of us may have careers; most of us just have jobs. Some of us may possess brilliant talents; most of us merely show aptitudes. Some may become famous, but most will remain unknown. Nevertheless we can and do lead full, satisfying, effective lives.

I'm thinking of several dynamic school teachers I know who are past 40. I'm thinking of the elderly and charming hostess at a restaurant where I sometimes dine, and of the cheerful domestic whose dutiful performance of household chores is a great contribution to the smooth operation of her employer's home.

These women are all unmarried. Judging by the generally pleasing dispositions they display, I would say that they all lead lives which are far from "null or ineffectual."

But there is a third meaning for "frustrate"—to prevent from attaining a purpose.

Now, I ask, do I hope to get married just for the sake of being

married? Is that my purpose? Or do I want to be married because I see that marriage is a means of attaining happiness and a full life?

The answer is, of course, that marriage is only one means of achieving my real purpose. It is, I agree, the most tried-and-true means, but it is not the only one.

What if I *don't* get married? I can perfect whatever work I earn my living by, and so become essential to my employer. (Isn't that, after all, a basic need for all of us—to be essential?) I can become fairly important to my relatives and friends too. Being unmarried need not deter me from exchanging visits.

Because a single woman has more leisure time than a married one, I can become a zealous volunteer worker whenever there is a campaign for some worthy purpose at my church or in my community.

As a single woman, I'll have more time for hobbies. The number of hours my married sister spends mending clothes for her husband and children I can conscientiously use to do fancy embroidery, water-colors or whatever else I like.

Will I be lonely? I don't think so. With all the contacts I'll have the opportunity to make at the office and in club and committee work, I certainly should find at least a few human beings with whom I share enough similar interest for friendship.

If you are going to compare the loneliness of married and unmarried women you must also remember that women live longer than men. Thus wifehood entails the risk of widowhood. And the woman who has given all her time to her husband may feel much more lonely after his death than the woman of the same age who has never experienced the close partnership of marriage.

If I should not marry, will the full blooming of my womanly personality be thwarted by my failure to experience motherhood? I certainly hope not. Motherhood, as I've seen it at best, is more than just the physical begetting of a child. It is also guiding and assisting the young to worthy adulthood.

I imagine there will always be a relative's child, or a kid in the neighborhood, or a youngster my pastor can tell me about who could do happily with more adult attention than he is getting. If my maternal instincts really want to come to the fore, I believe I'll have no difficulty finding baby-sitting employment.

How about sex? Will I not have missed something if I go to my grave without ever having known connubial bliss? Undoubt-

edly, yes! But just as a married woman woos disaster by constantly brooding about the independence she lost when she declared her wedding vows, so, too, am I inviting trouble by concentrating upon sex and what I'm likely to miss by not being wed.

What if I *don't* get married? I'll get along all right—and so will most of the other eight million women who must remain single.

Stop worrying about us!

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. Unmarried women are happier than married women—they live longer and have more interesting lives.
2. It's all right to get married, but it is foolish to become anxious about the unmarried state.
3. Married women can also be frustrated—this feeling is not restricted to spinsters.
4. Even if women do not marry, they can lead fruitful, happy, and full lives. The problem is not as bad as some people think.
5. There is no point in getting married just for the sake of being married.

*Key:* Add two and three and subtract one to determine the number of the correct answer.

### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
2 min.	530	3 min., 30 sec.	303
2 min., 15 sec.	472	4 min.	265
2 min., 30 sec.	424	4 min., 30 sec.	236
2 min., 45 sec.	386	5 min.	212
3 min.	354	5 min., 30 sec.	194

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

Plot this rate on your progress graph.

## Timed Comprehension Exercise 7

TAKE IT EASY TO LEARN BETTER <sup>15</sup>

by Donald A. Laird, Sc.D.

**Start timing**→Spare-time learners are usually the best learners. Their rate of learning is helped, of course, by the fact that they want to learn and consequently try to learn. But they are also helped by circumstances—they are forced to take *their learning by easy stages*. Other work prevents them from applying themselves to learning for so long that they get dyspepsia of learning.

Edgar Burchell, the janitor who became a leading medical scientist and teacher, is an example. He was one of nine children, and he had to leave school and go to work before finishing the grades. At twenty-two he was scrubbing floors twelve hours a day at the New York Eye and Ear Infirmary.

But during his lunch hour he attended staff lectures, carefully pretending he was in the lecture amphitheater for janitor work, but drinking in every word that was said. When his twelve-hour stint was up he remained at the infirmary, watching the interns in the laboratory. "Teach me how you do these things," he said to them, "and I'll do them for you." Then, from his small savings, he bought a second-hand anatomy text which he studied in his other spare moments.

Picking up his education in this way, Burchell made himself one of the world's authorities on bacteriology and on the anatomy of the head. Surgeons from all over the country consulted this former janitor before performing puzzling head operations. He had never been a medical student, yet he was given one of those rare honorary degrees of Doctor of Science.

Such spare-time learning is especially efficient since there is time for it to soak in between learning periods. When learning complex things, there is an extra advantage in taking breathing spells. When beginning something new it also speeds up learning to have breathers. Most eager beginners push themselves too long at a time. Such crowded study or practice produces fatigue or boredom which hinders learning.

<sup>15</sup> From *Your Life*. Reprinted with permission of the author and of the editor of *Your Life*.

You can't gain wisdom quickly, but you can gain wisdom steadily by easy stages.

Instead of practicing at the typewriter, or piano, or behind the steering wheel, for two solid hours, practice only one hour. Then take a breather before doing the second hour of practice or study. You will be fresher when you start the second lap. Such spaced practice or study is better for learning than is continuous practice of the same total length.

Spaced practice not only eliminates fatigue and boredom, but also some maturation of the nerve connections which have been exercised seems to take place during the space between practice periods. Whatever the reason, however, distributed practice is better than continuous practice. Long practice periods can be safely used only after one has acquired considerable skill.

The most efficient distribution of practice or study sessions varies with the kind of material being learned. Each person has to find the best distribution of practice that fits him and his task. Follow these two guides in spacing your learning periods:

1. Each practice should be long enough to warm you up and to allow the peak of your present skill to be reached.
2. It should be halted when fatigue, boredom, errors, or slowness appear.

Learning is more efficient when it is fun, less efficient when it is drudgery. Practice periods can safely be made longer if the learner is excited about learning. Learning is often more effective in a group, since individual progress then acquires some features of a game or contest. The clever teacher, or expert job trainer, has the knack of arousing the learner's interest to the point of actual excitement. The ambitious individual often lets his ambition provide the excitement.

Keeping score on oneself gives some of this game spirit to the lone learner. People usually master a sport such as golf or bowling quickly largely because they naturally keep tabs on how they're doing. Score keeping is easy for some kinds of learning, such as typing speed. These scores can be charted week after week to show one's learning curve, or rate of progress in mastering the subject.

Sometimes a numerical score is not possible, but there are other ways to find an indication of one's progress. The person who is trying to improve his handwriting, for example, can keep samples of his regular Saturday morning penmanship for a period

of time, pasting them side by side to observe the improvement.

Don't guess at your progress if it is possible to figure some way to keep a week-by-week record. This record can give you the encouragement needed to break through a temporary slump in progress.

Most learning shows rapid progress for the first few days; then it tapers off. After six months of practice it may take a full month of practice to make as much progress as was made the first week. This is often called the principle of diminishing returns, but that description is illusory. While the gain per week of practice may diminish, it is still a gain, bringing one closer to perfection. The jack-of-all-trades stops practice when the increases become small; so thus he never becomes king of any trade.

It is when the gains slow down that you must become excited over even a slight gain.

Extra practice is especially needed where the gains are small, or when the job seems to be mastered at last. Just-enough-to-learn is not enough to be satisfied. The extra practice after it is "just learned" makes the learning more permanent and easier to perform in daily life. Psychologists call this overlearning.

Taxi-drivers can weave their vehicles through congested traffic with breath-taking skill because they have overlearned through months and months of practice in actual driving. Their careenings may frighten bystanders, but these overpracticed drivers have the world's best safety records.

The job details which are not routinely used over and over so they become overlearned should be practiced in spare and slack times until they *are* overlearned.

For example, when Raymond L. Ditmars was sixteen his job did not give enough practice for him to overlearn his shorthand. Consequently he practiced it by taking down the sermon in church!

Much education is lost because it was not overlearned at school—and because learning stopped when school stopped. When children return to school in the fall they know about 20 per cent less than they did in June. A year after graduating from high school there is a learning loss of 50 per cent. This backsliding in learning is more marked among businessmen than among professional men.

Keep your learning useful by rehearsing it in spare moments. Keep it growing by expanding your reading, observation, and thinking. We are what we have learned. What we have let slip is what we used to be.



The simplest learning is that of muscle control, as in learning to walk, swim, throw a ball, and in some of the simpler factory operations. A higher degree of motor skill also can be learned—such as that developed by the baseball pitcher.

Sensory-motor learning involves the cooperation of muscles and senses. Learning to play a musical instrument, to typewrite, and to handle many factory jobs are examples of sensory-motor learning.

Ideo-motor learning combines higher thought processes with muscular actions. Learning shorthand, bookkeeping, or a foreign language are examples.

Ideational learning is the highest type, in which muscular factors are not appreciably concerned. This learning is in the realm of ideas.

Such a classification from muscular to ideational learning is convenient, but somewhat artificial. In practical life learning is usually a mixture of several of these levels, although one is possibly more marked than the others.

The level of learning for one and the same job may also vary during the different stages of learning it. Laying bricks may be primarily a muscular task—in which case we have a “mechanical” bricklayer who is assigned to rough work. After the muscular parts of bricklaying are learned, however, ideational learning can be added—as Frank Gilbreth did when he learned to lay bricks with about one-third the conventional number of motions.

The motor or mechanical aspects of a job are likely to be learned first; then the sensory and ideational aspects. When these higher aspects are neglected, the individual is no more than a mechanical worker.

For individual advancement one should strive to learn not only the motions of a job, but also the sensory and ideational parts. In the practical world salary schedules run parallel to that classification of learning levels: jobs which call for mere motor learning have lowest pay scales, sensory-motor jobs a little higher pay, ideo-motor jobs still higher, and ideational the highest.

Learn to use your head along with your hands; then use your head more than your hands. The ideational part of learning removes one from the wage class and promotes one into the salary class—from a job into a position, from an occupation into a profession.

But whether simple motor learning or abstract ideational learn-

ing is involved, the laws for efficient learning are pretty much the same. The laws of efficient learning are as valuable for business as for the ambitious individual. It costs business around \$100 to "break in" an employee on the simplest job; the average job has a break-in cost of \$400 to \$500; on some jobs the cost runs into the thousands.

To the individual inefficient learning means a low earning level—and discouragement. Speed up your learning. Make it stay with you longer. Do this by:

1. Wanting to learn.
2. Taking it by easy stages at the outset.
3. Pushing yourself—but not to the point of staleness.
4. Keeping a record of your progress.
5. Getting excited about learning.
6. Keeping up practice as increases become small.
7. Using your head.

*Learners come to be earners.*

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. Never break the rhythm of your learning. Keep at a learning task continuously, without interruption, for quickest and most permanent results.
2. The more efficient your learning, the more money you will earn.
3. The best learning is spaced learning—skills and knowledge can soak in between periods of conscious learning. So take your learning by easy stages, with frequent breathers, keeping a record of your progress, and expecting smaller gains as you become more skillful.
4. Learning of physical skills is much more difficult than the acquisition of mental abilities.
5. Learning starts off slowly but gains momentum in later stages, with spectacular gains toward the end of the learning process.

*Key:* Add two and four and subtract three to determine the number of the correct answer.

## TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
2 min.	913	4 min., 30 sec.	406
2 min., 15 sec.	812	5 min.	365
2 min., 30 sec.	730	5 min., 30 sec.	332
2 min., 45 sec.	664	6 min.	304
3 min.	608	6 min., 30 sec.	280
3 min., 15 sec.	560	7 min.	261
3 min., 30 sec.	522	7 min., 30 sec.	244
3 min., 45 sec.	488	8 min.	228
4 min.	456	9 min.	203

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.  
Plot this rate on your progress graph.

### *Timed Comprehension Exercise 8*

And here, finally, is a third column by J. Donald Adams, comparable in difficulty and length to the two initial tests you took earlier in the book. At what comfortable but rapid rate can you read it now? Aim, as usual, for an understanding of his main idea.

#### SPEAKING OF BOOKS<sup>16</sup>

by J. Donald Adams

**Start timing**→Much water has gone under the bridge since sedate listings were the norm of publishers' advertising. We have to look sharp these days to make sure whether it is a brassiere or a book we are being urged to buy. I, for one, grow quite bewildered whenever I turn an eye—or is it an ear?—to the hucksters' crying of their literary wares, and I often wonder whether I've wandered into the wrong department. Here is a copywriter who signals for my attention by asking: "Do you get up in the morning almost as tired as you were the night before? Do you often have to drag yourself through your day's work?" Just as my eye is prepared to find the name of a new patent medicine, it falls somewhere on the word "book," and I discover that I am being invited to buy a volume on how to relax.

<sup>16</sup> From *The New York Times* Book Review. Reprinted with permission of the author.

Or, finding myself confronted by a line of large and bold-faced type reading "What a woman!" and under it a half-page picture of an equally bold-faced damsel, I am about to look for the name of the theatre where this new super-colossal drama is to open when I discover that this lady is expected to take her place as "one of the unforgettable women of fiction."

Such experiences have become so frequent as to be no longer novel, but the other day I saw an ad which made me realize that we are indeed on or over the threshold of momentous change. On the cover of Publishers' Weekly was a picture of a highly photogenic young woman, and under it the words, "Her novel is the book the entire trade has been waiting for." Nothing strange or new about that; her picture had appeared there before when "Forever Amber" was about to be published. My realization that I was standing on my head came when I turned the page.

There, on the double-spread advertising Miss Kathleen Winsor's new novel, the picture was repeated in smaller size, and under it were these significant words: "The recurrent theme of all our advertising will be this striking new photograph of the author." It was that word "theme" that shook me to my gizzard. The recurrent theme of all advertising would not be what Miss Winsor's novel was about, or even merely that this was the new work by the author of "Forever Amber." It would be simply the pleasing contours of Miss Winsor's physiognomy.

Surely the handwriting on the wall is plain. The sober prophets who have been proclaiming that we were about to enter a new literary era were speaking more truly than they knew—but for very different reasons than those which they had offered. Here was in the making the literary revolution to end all literary revolutions. The whole basis of literary appreciation for the reader, all the sage advice that has been spoken or written about literary apprenticeship—these are being swept relentlessly into the discard. Henceforth the bedeviled publisher need ask but one question of the aspiring author: "How well do you photograph?"—provided, of course, that there is any visible reason for asking the question at all.

This impending upheaval must necessarily deal a deathblow to the schools of creative writing which have been springing up all over the country. It should bring comfort and reassurance to those sour-visaged and sour-minded pessimists who protest from time to time, "But you can't teach anybody to write." And while

the schools will go under, their loss should be the beauty parlors' gain.

There are, it seems to me, quite unexplored avenues along which this new development may take us. If you insist on being logical about the significance of this revolution in book advertising, you must take the position, I suppose, that the use of the author's picture as a recurrent theme is merely a means of halting the wayward reader and causing him to read the accompanying text. Well, then, isn't there more than one way of skinning this particular cat? What's wrong with a publisher discovering an author with a face that would stop a clock, and using that as a recurrent theme? After all, pretty faces are a dime a dozen these days, and they have been displayed to the point of surfeit both on the screen and in the ads. Why not strike a fresh and startling note?

Rightly or wrongly, the craving for novelty is generally held to be one of the touchstones for the understanding of American character. I am willing to wager a complete set of the Elsie Dinsmore books against a single copy of "Star Money" to prove that a face which is the ultimate in ugliness, if used as a recurrent theme, will halt more readers in their tracks than will the repetition of fare, however pleasant, for which our appetite has become a little jaded. Whether that suggestion is adopted or not, it should be apparent to the least concerned reader that a new day is at hand, and that what it will bring us no man knows.

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. An ugly face would attract more attention to an ad than a beautiful one.
2. Book publishers are experimenting with new and startling developments in advertising—and Mr. Adams isn't very enthusiastic about them.
3. An author's picture is more important than the title of his or her book.
4. If an author does not photograph well, his or her book will not be successful.

**Key:** Subtract four from six to determine the number of the correct answer.

### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
1 min., 30 sec.	628	3 min.	314
1 min., 45 sec.	528	3 min., 30 sec.	264
2 min.	471	4 min.	237
2 min., 30 sec.	376	4 min., 30 sec.	210

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

Plot this rate on your progress graph.

Now average the rates on all eight timed selections in this chapter and plot that average rate as a straight line, parallel to line AB of the graph.

Subtract your original rate on the first Adams piece (page 13) from this average and you will have a rough approximation of your increase in speed in words per minute.

You can then go still further in gathering statistics. Determine your percentage gain by dividing your *original rate* into the *increase*, carried to two decimal places. Here is an illustrative example:

Let us say you read the original piece at 217 w.p.m., that your average on the eight timed selections in this chapter is 267 w.p.m. Your increase, then, is 50 w.p.m. Divide 217 into 50.00 ( $217 \sqrt{50.00}$ ) and your gain is approximately .23, or 23 per cent.

Any improvement of 15 to 25 per cent at the end of your first training period is eminently satisfactory—if you did better, with full comfort and comprehension, the gain is excellent. And if your increase is in the neighborhood of 40 to 50 per cent, your improvement is spectacular.

Record your statistics below:

ORIGINAL RATE (PAGE 13):	_____	W.P.M.
AVERAGE RATE AFTER TRAINING:	_____	W.P.M.
GAIN:	_____	W.P.M.
PERCENTAGE GAIN:	_____	PER CENT

## 9. A Challenge to Your Reading Habits

The training afforded by the eight timed selections you have read should have effected—if directions were followed faithfully and if you have the sort of personality immediately susceptible to training—a change in your intellectual and psychological attitudes to reading. Let me catalogue, briefly, the factors in this change:

1. A realization that reading is not directly concerned with *words*, or even *phrases*, but only with *ideas*.

2. A realization that main ideas are more important than minor details.

3. A realization that the desire to get the main idea quickly can, when combined with training in perception and in other aspects of the reading act, produce a rate increase of 25 to 50 per cent, with little loss in comfort and no loss whatever in comprehension.

These I have called realizations. When you have had still further training, the realizations will become habits, the habits will become reflexive, and speed will become natural and automatic. To this end, further training sessions in rapid comprehension will be provided in later chapters. Meanwhile, you can obviously continue your training on your own whenever you do any reading. Read—whether it be a magazine article, a newspaper columnist, or a book of nonfiction—for the main ideas, and read to get those main ideas quickly. And if you're reading a novel, follow the general lines of the plot rapidly, instead of getting bogged down in any of the details. It is true that some novels are of such importance, of such depth, or stylistically so delightful that you may wish to read slowly, pausing perhaps to meditate upon and examine carefully even the most minor details. Well and good. Some novels may be read that way, and you yourself may feel in the mood, at times, for such slow, contemplative, leisurely reading. But recall, please, that your *method* of reading and your *speed* of reading should be suited to the material at hand; and, since you are now in training for rapid reading and quick comprehension, your interests will best be served if you practice on light novels in which the framework of the plot is the most important element. *There is no law against reading slowly, provided you are able to read rapidly when the material or the neces-*

*sity demands speed.* That is the important point to keep in mind.

I should like to issue a challenge to you, in the nature of an experiment. Pick up a light novel in your stationery store or from the newsstand—one of the popular 25-cent reprints in the Pocket-book, Bantam, or Avon line, or ask one of your friends or the librarian at the local library to make a recommendation. Nothing heavy, no historical novel a thousand pages long; just a short, interesting, fast-paced novel. Choose an evening when you will have a few hours at your disposal. Then see if you can meet this challenge: read the entire novel through in one evening, rapidly following the general lines of the plot, skimming or skipping where you can, but aiming to get through. You may not get quite the emotional experience from such rapid cruising as from more leisurely reading, but you will be practicing the kind of rapid reading which you are attempting to master.

If you can meet this challenge, you will have an experience no reader should miss. You will see that it is possible to get the gist of a novel in a few hours, you will discover that it is far from necessary to give *all* novels the slow, poky treatment that causes the untrained reader to take weeks or months before he turns the last page.

And even if you do not meet the challenge completely, the effort, however short of total success it may fall, will be beneficial to you. Try it—soon. You will realize that you do not have to read as slowly as you used to!

## 10. Plateaus in Learning a New Skill

Let me digress at this point to talk about an important element in every learning process—"plateaus."

A plateau, as you know, is a level piece of ground. It does not go up, but neither does it go down. In learning, a plateau is that point in the improvement process when no progress seems to occur. At the beginning of the conquest of a new skill, whether it be in mathematics, language, science, music, art, or even in typing or golf or swimming or tennis, the learner may make great and visible strides. Progress is at first spectacular—then suddenly there is an unexplainable, a mysterious leveling off. A plateau has been reached. Though the effort seems not to have slackened,



though the desire to improve is as earnest as ever before, little or no gain seems to be recorded.

Whenever you attempt to learn a new and difficult skill, expect these periods of leveling off.

*In any learning process, plateaus are inevitable.*

They are *not* an indication of failure. At most, they are merely a token that the mind has decided to rest. When the period of rest is over, the mind, relaxed and refreshed, will pick up speed and attack the problem with renewed vigor.

Educators say that plateaus are the common denominators of the learning process. They are the lull before the storm. Though the conscious mind may rest, the subconscious mind never rests—not for a single minute, not for a single second, whether awake or asleep.

And—this is a word of encouragement—directly after a plateau is over, progress is more rapid, for a time, than it was before the plateau was reached.

It is a good idea, when you believe you have reached a plateau, to plan a slight breather. Take a day or two off, then return to your work with refreshed mind and renewed zeal. During your lay-off, progress will continue even though your mind does not *consciously* make any efforts at improvement.

Be careful, on the other hand, not to stay away from your training for so long that you are stale when you return to it, or, worse yet, that you have lost your original desire and enthusiasm. For the average learner, a day or two is the proper amount of time for a breather.



## CHAPTER VI

# Inner Speech, Vocalization, Lip Movements, and Regressions

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### *Preview*

#### *You will learn:*

- The differences between the motor reader, auditory reader, and visual reader.
- How to make a start at decreasing inner speech.
- How to eliminate lip movements and vocalization.
- What causes regressions, and how to discover and remove these causes.

IN CHAPTER VI, YOU WILL DISCOVER, AND ELIMINATE, ANY REMAINING CAUSES OF SLOW READING.

## 1. Inner Speech

According to J. A. O'Brien, an expert in the field of improved reading habits, there are essentially three kinds of readers: *motor* readers, *auditory* readers, and *visual* readers.

The *motor* reader is the lip mover, the vocalizer. He accompanies his reading with various (and quite unnecessary) movements of the muscles of articulation. "In other words," as O'Brien succinctly puts it, "reading is not confined to the visualization of the printed symbols. Concomitant with this visualization there occur movements, more or less incipient in character, of the tongue, lips, vocal cords, larynx, inner palate, throat, and the general physiological mechanism that functions in oral speech. The reader goes through the form of saying the words to himself."<sup>1</sup>

The *auditory* reader *hears* a page of print. He pronounces the words in his mind, though his organs of speech are at rest.

The *visual* reader *says* nothing, *hears* nothing, *sees* all. To him a page is a canvas on which his mind paints pictures. He sees, not words or print, but action and movement. He hears, not the sounds of the words before him, but the sounds which those words may describe.

These three types—*motor*, *auditory*, and *visual*—are, as you can guess, listed in ascending order of skill. The lip mover, or vocalizer, is a very slow reader, for he is artificially keeping his rate down to the level at which he can pronounce words—and this is about one-fourth as fast as he could read them silently if only he knew how. He tires quickly because there is so much muscular activity. He makes frequent regressions, for the eyes tend to rush ahead and the voice stays behind. Often he uses his finger to point, so that he can keep his eyes back where his voice is. He tends to be a word-by-word reader, for the unit of pronunciation is a word, or even a syllable, although the unit of meaning is usually a phrase or even a whole sentence. He makes numerous fixations on a line, since his eyes must focus on every syllable or

<sup>1</sup> J. A. O'Brien, *Silent Reading*, The Macmillan Company, New York, 1921. Reprinted with permission.

word which his lips pronounce. And, finally, his comprehension is poor, for his mind is as much involved with the mechanics of reading as it is with the ideas—if not more so. In fine, the whole reading process is a chore, and the less he reads the happier he is.

The *auditory* type can be a fairly skillful reader. His speed is not unduly hampered, for he is not actually pronouncing the words he “hears,” but only imagining their pronunciation. Only a *small* part of his mind is involved with the sound of the words; but, small as it may be, by just so much is he retarding comprehension.

The *visual* reader is the one who has really mastered the art of reading. We may say that in a sense he doesn’t read at all but *absorbs*, in the same effortless, unconscious, efficient manner that a dry sponge absorbs water.

It is theoretically possible to eliminate a good deal of auditory, inner-speech, or inner-hearing reading and to make most of your reactions to a page of print visual. That is, you can eventually become far more aware of the *ideas* the author is developing than of the *words* (and their sounds) that he is using.

There is no direct means of training for visual reading—the virtual elimination of inner speech is an end product of all the other skills which increase the speed of idea absorption. Your practice on digit- and phrase-perception exercises, in which you rely on the image and afterimage rather than on a *verbalization* of what you see, will be of tremendous help in creating conditions conducive to the stifling of inner speech; and further exercises in speedier grasp of main ideas will be of equal value.

It is true, most reading psychologists agree, that inner speech is *not* necessary for understanding, even though many slow readers rely heavily upon it. When you are listening to someone speak, you are far less aware of the *words* he uses than of the *ideas* those words add up to—provided what he says interests you. On the other hand, if the speaker is boring or if his ideas make little sense, then you become uncomfortably aware of his isolated words. Rarely, however, do you repeat his words in your own mind as you listen, and of course there is no need to repeat the words you read, except that you may have formed a strong habit of doing so. So an added factor in the elimination of inner speech is the intensity of interest you feel in the communication of ideas which an author is making to you as you read.

Frequently, in my classes at City College, students say to me,

"But I *hear* the words I read." The complaint is genuine and occasionally a little desperate. My only honest answer can be: "Of course you do. Almost all readers but the very rapid and very skillful do. But don't worry. As your speed and skill increase, you will hear them less and less. You may never eliminate auditory responses entirely, 100 per cent of the time, but you will gradually *decrease* your reliance on them as you *increase* your reliance on visual responses."

## 2. Lip Movements and Vocalization

It is far easier for a motor reader to change his habits than for an auditory reader. The reason is obvious. The motor reader goes through certain observable and external movements. They are movements over which he has voluntary control. He can move his lips or keep them quiet. He can move his tongue or keep it relaxed. He can issue sounds through his vocal cords or remain silent. It is the easiest thing in the world for the motor reader to inhibit all movements of the vocal apparatus at will. But can he go on reading while doing so?

Yes, he can—by the simple process described earlier in this book: setting up an opposite good habit to eliminate an undesirable one.

Lip movements and vocalization can be eliminated, not only with great ease, but also with astonishing rapidity. The opposing habit to set up is that of rendering the vocal organs *incapable of movement* while reading is going on. How to do this? Either by *force* or by *intrigue*. Louella Cole, in her book, *Improvement of Reading*,<sup>2</sup> makes two suggestions for teaching a child to read without vocalization. They are suggestions which are also adaptable to the adult. Here they are, in her own words:

I. *Force*—The simplest method is to render the speech mechanism incapable of pronouncing words, even partially. A simple and effective means of bringing about this result is to have the child put two fingers into his mouth, using them to separate his upper and lower teeth and to hold down his tongue. Nobody can articulate words with his mouth hanging open. If the child, through force of habit, moves his jaws to articulate, he bites his fingers.

<sup>2</sup> Rinehart & Company, Inc., New York. Reprinted with permission.

With the tongue and the jaws both out of commission, there will be no pronunciation. Instead of his fingers a child may use his ruler or a large-sized eraser. The fingers are better than either wood or rubber, however, partly because the pupil is unwilling to bite them and partly because he always has them with him!

II. *Intrigue*—Another, if even less elegant, procedure is to let the child chew gum while he is reading. His speech mechanism is out of commission, not because it is at rest but because it is doing something else. No one can pronounce words and chew gum simultaneously. Naturally, a pupil should not persist in these techniques until they become habits. They should be used only until the tendency to pronounce words has been broken.

Dr. Cole cites this interesting case:

John was a loud vocalizer. Whatever else might be wrong with him, it was evident at once to the teacher of the remedial class that something must be done to stop the noise John made, if the other children were to get their work done. Without waiting to make any analysis, Miss A. promptly recommended the finger-in-the-mouth technique. There ensued a silence—but almost no comprehension of the reading matter. John seemed unable to recognize even the simplest words unless he could pronounce them. In order to find something that John could read without vocalizing, it was necessary to use a second-grade book. During the first week John had his doubts about the value of this method but agreed to give it a fair trial. Before the end of the second week he had begun to feel that his reading was much less labored than ever before. Instead of being work, the simple book he was using became play. At about this time the boy appeared one morning with a neatly whittled and sandpapered piece of wood, all wrapped up in a clean handkerchief. During the following six weeks John kept the piece of wood between his teeth whenever he was reading. No other treatment was used for this boy. Yet in two months' time he improved nearly three years in speed and over a year in comprehension. Moreover, he reported a great increase in the ease with which he read. After leaving the class, John continued to carry the wood around with him, but he used it less and less. At the end of the year he was reading without any artificial aid to keep him from vocalizing.

I have found, from my own experience with scores of adult students who have a tendency to vocalize, that maintaining a rigidity in the vocal apparatus while reading will eliminate lip movements and vocalization within two weeks. During *every bit* of reading in this two-week period, the jaws must be clamped

shut, the tongue held rigid against the roof of the mouth, and the lips maintained absolutely motionless, even if, in difficult cases, the student must use the thumb and forefinger to hold the lips in a viselike grip.

*This is the one bad habit of reading that is the quickest to disappear when an inhibiting set of conditions is put into motion.* At first the student is comically uncomfortable. His eyes pop, he is the very picture of misery. His whole being cries out to be allowed to relapse into the comforting habit of accompanying his reading with synchronized muscular action. But if his spirit is stronger than his flesh, he very shortly finds nonvocalized reading decreasing in discomfort. Soon he needs to exert less force to make his lips and tongue behave. Suddenly he finds them behaving without any force whatever—presto, the habit is conquered! Of course, he has to be vigilant for a while to be sure that no relapse occurs; however, once the habit has definitely disappeared, the entire reading act becomes so much more efficient and rapid that there is little temptation to return to previous error.

During the period of training for the elimination of vocalization, the student reads material that is both simple and interesting. Simple, so that no difficult words or involved sentence structure will tempt him to vocalize. Interesting, so that he will wish to get to the end quickly and thus become impatient with any acts that slow up his reading, as of course lip movements and vocalization do.

### 3. Regressions

The regressive reader is the reader who does not trust his comprehension; who perhaps does not ever trust his ability in any area of his experiences.

Let us look at an extreme case: Miss X, a spinster of thirty-eight, did well in many of the aspects of training which we offer at the Adult Reading Laboratory, but always her progress was impeded by an almost compulsive need to regress. If a selection contained figures or statistics, she would have an incomplete feeling unless she went back, time and time again, and reread them, often breaking the trend of her comprehension in order to reassure herself that she had read them correctly the first time. On

any one line of print she would return several times to the first few words before she reached the last one. In the normal person, regressions are caused mainly by (1) *faulty comprehension* or (2) an *inadequate vocabulary* (which latter is one specific cause of the former general defect); in the case of Miss X, regressions were an almost neurotic pattern.

Discussions with her turned up the fascinating fact that she was a habitual "regressor" (if we may extend the term to non-reading acts) in everything she did. After she stepped out of her apartment, and locked the door behind her, she would open it again, and walk back into her rooms to make sure the lights were turned out, the toaster disconnected, the windows shut, the stove turned off. If she went to the ladies' room in a public place, she would no sooner pass the threshold than she would have to rush out in a panic to make sure that the door had, indeed, been marked "Ladies" and not "Men," and even after that would have to be reassured by the distinctive equipment in the room that the lavatory was intended for her sex. After making a business phone call (she was the secretary to the vice president of a small bank), she would often put a call through a second time to the same person to ask him if she had remembered to tell him so-and-so (of course, she always had). She was a neat, methodical worker, but lost an immense amount of time, energy, and efficiency constantly checking up on herself.

And this pattern carried over, naturally, in her reading. Though her intelligence was considerably above normal and her comprehension good, she never trusted either—so she was a slow reader, with poor concentration and four to six regressions on every line of print.

Now this is, I have said, an extreme case, but actually it is only an aggravated form of a pattern that many slow readers have developed. Unless the reading material practically defies comprehension because of the style of writing or the confusion in the mind of the writer, regressions to any great extent are unnecessary: they slow the reading (obviously); they ruin the smooth continuity of comprehension; they inhibit deep concentration; and, most of all, they tend to become a fixed habit that operates even when the reader does not consciously require regressions for complete understanding of the thoughts on the page.

If you regress only occasionally, pay no further attention to this aspect of the reading act: the perception exercises and the



further skills you will develop later on will keep your regressions to a minimum. But if you feel that regressions are habitual and usually unnecessary, attempt to break the habit at once. Keep plowing ahead in all your reading even when you feel you ought to regress for better understanding; before you continue developing important habits of speeding up to your ceiling rate, you will want to make a good start at inhibiting any *habitual* tendency to regress.

The great educational philosopher, John Dewey, has made it plain that we learn by doing; that the best way to acquire skill in doing a thing is by actual practice.

The converse of Dewey's philosophy is equally true: we learn *not* to do a thing by *not* doing it; the best way to inhibit a habit is to set up a contrary habit.

Thus, when we wish to teach a child not to misspell a word, the most effective method is to have him practice on the correct spelling until the incorrect one fades from his memory. (What is habit but reflexive and automatic memory of previous acts?)

To teach an aviator *not* to pull back the stick and attempt to climb when he feels his plane going into a stall or a spin (for such an action, logical as it may seem, makes him lose control over his plane and in most cases results in a fatal crack-up), we must enable him to gain such complete mastery over the reverse habit—that is, pushing the stick forward and forcing the plane into a more rapid descent—that his muscles will react instantaneously, and the former habit will fade from his memory because a new habit is taking its place.

So with *regressions*. To inhibit the habit of reading backward—that is, letting the eyes return to words or phrases previously read in a line of print—we must set up the contrary habit of *constantly reading forward*.

To that end, read the following poem. Avoid all regressions even if the going becomes rough or the meaning seems elusive; just read ahead, getting what comprehension you can out of the piece and resisting any temptation to regress.

## *Regression-Inhibiting Exercise 1*

### THE RAVEN

by Edgar Allan Poe

Once upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,  
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—  
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,  
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.  
“’Tis some visitor,” I muttered, “tapping at my chamber door—  
Only this and nothing more.”

Ah, distinctly I remember, it was in the bleak December,  
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.  
Eagerly I wished the morrow;—vainly I had sought to borrow  
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—  
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain  
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before;  
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating  
“’Tis some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—  
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door;—  
This it is and nothing more.”

Presently my soul grew stronger; hesitating then no longer,  
“Sir,” said I, “or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore;  
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,  
And so faintly you came tapping—tapping at my chamber door—  
That I scarce was sure I heard you”—here I opened wide the  
door:—

Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering,  
fearing,  
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;  
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,  
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, “Le-  
nore!”

This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"

Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,  
Soon again I heard a tapping, somewhat louder than before.

"Surely," said I, "surely that is something at my window lattice;  
Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—

Let my heart be still a moment, and this mystery explore;—

'Tis the wind and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,  
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore;  
Not the least obeisance made he; not a minute stopped or stayed  
he;

But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—  
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—

Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,  
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,  
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure  
no craven,

Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly  
shore—

Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore!"  
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,  
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore;  
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being  
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—  
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door.

With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only  
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.  
Nothing further then he uttered—not a feather then he fluttered—  
Till I scarcely more than muttered, "Other friends have flown  
before—

On the morrow *he* will leave me, as my hopes have flown before."  
Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,  
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store,  
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster  
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—  
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore—  
Of 'Never—nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling all my fancy into smiling,  
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird, and bust,  
and door;  
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking  
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—  
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore  
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing  
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core;  
This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining  
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamplight gloated o'er  
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamplight gloating o'er,  
*She* shall press, ah, nevermore!

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen  
censer  
Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.  
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he  
hath sent thee  
Respite—respite and nepenthé from thy memories of Lenore!  
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthé, and forget this lost Lenore!"  
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!—  
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here  
ashore,  
Desolate yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—  
On this home by Horror haunted—tell me truly, I implore—  
Is there—is there balm in Gilead?—tell me—tell me, I implore!"  
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet!" said I, "thing of evil!—prophet still, if bird or devil!  
By that Heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—  
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,  
It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name Lenore—  
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore."

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked, up-  
starting—

"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian shore!  
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath spoken!  
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my door!  
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off  
my door!"

Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting,  
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;  
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,  
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the  
floor;

And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor  
Shall be lifted—nevermore!

### *Regression-Inhibiting Exercise 2*

Now if you begin to realize that nonregressive reading *is* within the realm of possibility for you, even if it at first seems uncomfortable, even if you are left with a feeling of incompleteness, try another exercise. In the next selection, a news item from *The New York Times*, you will encounter many unimportant details. If you attempt to absorb *all* the names of people and places, *all* the figures and locations, you will regress, without question. But try reading only to follow the *main* happening, avoid all regressions, and notice how it feels.

SEAMAN PARKS BOX CONTAINING \$1,100 ON  
BAR; STRANGELY, HE GETS IT ALL BACK  
MONTHS LATER

A sailor, they say, can pile up a prodigious roll of greenbacks

during a nine-month voyage on dangerous seas these days. Ralph Puett, a seaman, from Orange, Texas, did.

His legs still braced against the roll and pitch of the Atlantic's waves, Puett beat a tack up South Street on Sept. 1 and moored beside the rail of Angus MacPherson's Bar at 50 Trinity Place.

As Puett washed the salt-spray taste from his mouth, Louis Kelly, the bartender, suggested that he lay down the heavy burden under his arm. Puett explained it was a new suit, a strictly snappy shore suit, a suit in which a home-coming sailor could cut a figure ashore. He didn't tell Kelly that the box contained also \$1,100 in cash—a third of his pay for the dangerous voyage just finished.

So when the taste in his mouth was somewhat improved, Puett moved on, leaving behind his suit. Kelly noticed the forgotten parcel later in the day and turned it over to Angus MacPherson. Puett must have found other moorings, because he failed to return to the Trinity Place anchorage.

MacPherson turned the box over to the detectives of the Greenwich Street station. They opened it, as policemen have a right to do, and found the suit. They found, too, Puett's hard-earned pay.

Detectives of the Greenwich Street station can find a needle in a haystack. They cannot find an unknown merchant seaman in New York City—not without a clue.

A clue they did find. Puett's identification papers. They communicated with Orange, Tex.; learned the name of the line for which Puett worked. The rest was simple.

Puett appeared at Police Headquarters yesterday where Col. Maurice Simmons, in charge of lost property, held the box. Angus MacPherson was there and so was Louis Kelly and a man from the Seaman's Bank for Savings, 74 Wall Street, where Puett sometimes banks his money.

All hands concerned answered the questions of Colonel Simmons to his satisfaction. The shore suit and the \$1,100 were handed over to Puett. Puett, who has been low on funds since the middle of September, wrapped a gnarled fist around the roll.

"I have," he said, "a taste of the salty spray in my mouth."

And away they went, Puett, Kelly and MacPherson. Detectives, who know nothing of salty spray, landlubbers that they are, remained behind.

### *Regression-Inhibiting Exercise 3*

Here, now, is a similar selection for further practice in non-regressions.

#### FOUR-LEAF CLOVERS BY THE MILLION <sup>3</sup>

by Bruce Cole

One man who definitely owes his good fortune to four-leaf clovers is Charles T. Daniels. He raises the things in his back yard, at the astronomical rate of about 100,000 a week, and grosses around \$25,000 a year for his pains.

The clovers sell in a variety of forms as lucky pieces. Admiral Byrd took one along on his first trip to the Antarctic. Houdini carried one while performing escape acts. They seem to be especially popular among servicemen today, particularly aviators, paratroopers and submarine crews. Even General Eisenhower has one.

It all began as a hobby, and Daniels still conducts it at his home in Balboa Heights, in the time left over from his duties as chief engineer of our Government's telephone system in the Panama Canal Zone. A score of native girls tend the plants and harvest the daily crop. Daniels' two sons, both engineers, also take an active part in the business. They designed and built an electric press which flattens hundreds of clovers at a time without destroying the chlorophyll, so that the leaves remain green and lifelike. The pressed clovers are shipped to a New York agent, who arranges for their use in greeting cards, advertising literature, calendars, jewelry, good-luck charms and dozens of other novelty items.

This success has not been a matter of luck, but of plain hard work. Daniels involuntarily acquired some knowledge of plant raising as a boy, when he had to help in his father's greenhouses. Horticulture did not appeal to him then, however, and as soon as possible he got out of the greenhouses and into electricity. He became a telephone engineer, and wound up at his present post in the Canal Zone.

With off-duty time to kill, and a climate and soil where everything grew luxuriantly, he fell back on horticulture as a hobby.

<sup>3</sup> From the *Saturday Evening Post*. Reprinted with permission of the author.

He deliberately chose a project certain to keep him occupied for a long time—the cultivation of a strain of clover which would have four leaves as a matter of course instead of by accident. It took him seventeen years of laborious experimentation to perfect it.

Now he turns out four-leaf clovers the year around in chemical solutions with very little soil, in trays about two feet square. He has things down to such a fine point that he can produce clovers in three different sizes to fill varying needs of the trade—one inch, five eighths of an inch, and a quarter of an inch.

### *Regression-Inhibiting Exercise 4*

And here is a somewhat technical excerpt. Again the temptation to regress will be great. Resist, even if you do not *completely* understand everything you read.

#### NORMAL EYES FOR READING <sup>4</sup>

by James R. Gregg, Opt.D.  
*Instructor, Physiological Optics*  
*Los Angeles School of Optometry*

Numerous physical and mental qualities have an influence upon the child's reading skill. It cannot be said that any one of these is the main cause of reading problems. In most cases it may be a combination of factors which retards reading development. Whether the basic causes be physical disabilities, physiological disorders, or psychological maladjustments, the fact remains that reading is primarily dependent upon the use of the eyes. Visual efficiency is necessary regardless of other organismic conditions.

Normal eyes are a prerequisite to adequate reading performance. The eyes must be healthy and able to function properly if reading is to be accomplished. What then are normal eyes for reading? This conference is concerned with a specific visual task, and what is normal for reading may or may not be normal for some different visual task. Reading is done at near point, and it is the failure to realize that the visual demands at this point are not the

<sup>4</sup> From the Claremont College Reading Conference *Yearbook*, volume 12, 1947, Claremont Graduate School, Claremont, California. Reprinted with permission. The *Yearbook* is a series of volumes concerning vision and the reading of printed material.



same as the demands of far point seeing, which has led to misunderstanding concerning the role of vision in reading problems.

The first studies of the eye concerned its physical characteristics. The emphasis was on distance seeing, and the first lenses were used to improve the sharpness of vision. There were no means available to investigate more than structural characteristics, the functional aspects of seeing were beyond the scope of knowledge and instrumentation of the time. The result was that the classification of normal eyes was based upon the ability to see clearly at distance. Clear vision is still important, especially for certain types of work, but it is not the only requirement for near point seeing.

The influence of this early approach to vision is still evident, particularly in the public conception of visual problems. Most people assume that as long as they can see clearly, there is nothing wrong with their eyes. It is obvious that the eyes must be free from disease and gross anatomical defects if they are to function properly. On this basis, most eyes are normal. However, the presence of normal structure does not guarantee smooth function. Neurological development, control in central nervous system, learning, and experience all play a part in determining how well the structure may be utilized.

Classical usage of the term "eye defects" is largely based upon far point seeing. The designation of visual problems at near point has been slow to develop. "Eye defects" generally means nearsightedness, astigmatism, or more than expected farsightedness, all of which in certain degrees produce blurred vision. In addition, crossed-eyes and muscular imbalances may be included as eye defects, but these also fall into the category of structural abnormalities. All of these anomalies are compared with a standard set up for far point seeing, and are defects in terms of physical characteristics and in terms of clear vision.

It has been the experience of many teachers to find the report of a retarded reader shows no visual defects are present. The report is correct, if it is meant the child has proper ocular structure and clear vision at optical infinity. Can it be assumed that his eyes are normal for reading? The use of the term "normal for distance seeing" can be applied with validity to reading only if it is true that what is abnormal for distance seeing is also a hindrance for reading. The term must be consistent or it has no

value. The visual measure must detect those inefficient in both environments, there should be correlation between poor achievement in reading and failure to pass the visual tests. The original question then can be stated in another way, is it true that a child who does *not* have normal eyes for far point seeing is handicapped for reading? The reliability of the visual standard can be examined in this manner.

### *Regression-Inhibiting Exercise 5*

The next exercise, too, is difficult, but less technical than the preceding one. Can you go right through? <sup>5</sup>

Dr. Townsend, a leader of a very different type, at the outset of the depression was a retired physician living at Long Beach, California. The incident which is said to have stimulated him to become a political crusader was the spectacle of three elderly women searching a garbage can for food. He declared that all persons past the age of sixty ought to receive a pension of 200 dollars a month raised by means of a sales tax. In order to increase purchasing power and stimulate industry, the pensioners were to be required to spend their pensions immediately. The Townsend pension plan was regarded as impracticable by competent economists; but the simplicity of the proposal, coupled with the sincerity and the apostolic zeal of Dr. Townsend himself and the political cleverness of some of his associates, won for it wide popular support. Millions of persons signed petitions in support of the plan; and by organizing themselves as a pressure group and voting for congressmen who were willing to promise them assistance, the Townsendites soon developed into a formidable political force.

—HENRY BAMFORD PARKES

### *Regression-Inhibiting Exercise 6*

And here, finally, are two comparatively easy selections. By now can you go right ahead, entirely free from regressions?

<sup>5</sup> From *Recent America*, Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York.

by Drew Pearson

Washington.—Supreme Court Justice Bill Douglas, whose sense of humor always is a great cheerer-up to the President, is telling this story on himself.

When the American Medical Association case was before the Supreme Court, Dr. Morris Fishbein pointed out to the AMA attorneys that oral argument in the case would begin on Friday and continue on Monday. Therefore, he suggested that if their argument didn't get across with the learned justices on Friday, they should switch to a new line on Monday.

"That's fine," replied the attorneys, "but how are we going to find out how the justices like our argument?"

"That's simple," replied Fishbein. "Just see what they say to each other about it."

"And how will we listen in on their conversation?" asked the intrigued, but puzzled, lawyers.

"That again is simple," replied Fishbein, according to Justice Douglas' version of the story. "We will hire lip-readers to watch them."

The lawyers confessed that the idea, though novel, was worth trying. So they employed two lip-readers, brought them into court early and made sure that they had front seats. One lip-reader was detailed to watch one side of the bench, the other kept his eyes glued on the other side.

The session on Friday was long and a bit dreary. Except for Justice Felix Frankfurter, who habitually fired a long series of questions at the attorneys, the justices kept solemn, silent faces. Felix, as usual, kept up a barrage of cross-examination.

Finally Justice Douglas leaned over and made a remark to Justice Stanley Reed.

After it was all over, the Medical Association attorneys gathered round the two lip-readers. As Justice Douglas tells the story, the lip-readers were quite discouraging. "There is very little to report," they said.

"But what did Justice Douglas say to Justice Reed?" asked the lawyers.

"We're afraid it won't be much help to you," replied one lip-

<sup>6</sup> From the *New York Mirror*. Reprinted with permission of the author.

reader. "But anyway here it is: Justice Douglas leaned over to Justice Reed and said: 'When is Felix going to keep his — trap shut!'"

## 2.

## SARTORIAL ROYALIST <sup>7</sup>

The wife of a Post editor now off at the wars, by the judicious use of four-leaf clovers and some hocus-pocus with horseshoes, acquired a cleaning woman who comes in twice a week. On a recent Thursday, when this gemlike creature arrived for work, she brought a report of a new flare-up of class warfare she had witnessed that morning.

She had boarded a crowded Philadelphia trolley car. Slumped in a seat and more or less dead to the world was a Negro man, a seedy, unvaleted-looking character, obviously the worse for alcoholic wear. A few blocks farther on, a nattily dressed Negro with carefully creased trousers and a flower in his buttonhole got on the car. Finding no seats empty, he clutched a strap just above the seat where the inebriated man catnapped. Suddenly he reached down, removed a bug which was crawling over the lapel of the drunk, and flicked it to the floor.

The alcoholized gentleman roused himself, blinked his eyes and focused them belligerently on the dapperly elegant strap-hanger.

"You put that right back," he demanded truculently. "The trouble with you rich folks is you don't want us poor folks to have *nothing* we can call our own."

If you have made even a slight start at eliminating regressive movement, you're well on your way. The methodical practice in perception in which you are engaging, further practice in reading for main ideas at top potential speed, and the vocabulary drills in chapter VIII will, in combination, act toward breaking the habit completely and will place you in control of regressions. You will use regressions *voluntarily*, only if faulty comprehension absolutely dictates their use, not because you've lost faith in your ability to understand or because you've developed an unfortunate pattern of habitually regressing at the slightest provocation.

<sup>7</sup> From the *Saturday Evening Post*, copyright, 1944, by the Curtis Publishing Co. Reprinted with permission.

## CHAPTER VII

# Further Training in Rapid Comprehension

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### *Preview*

#### *You will learn:*

- How to keep reading for main ideas.
- How to make your new and faster rate more comfortable, more self-assured, more nearly habitual.
- How to evaluate your progress to date.
- How your new reading patterns compare with those you had when you started your training.
- What improvement you have made in rapid and efficient reading.

IN CHAPTER VII YOU WILL CONTINUE YOUR TRAINING IN PUSHING THROUGH SELECTIONS OF VARYING LENGTH AND DIFFICULTY TO UNDERSTAND THE AUTHOR'S MAIN POINTS IN A MINIMUM OF TIME.

## 1. Evaluating Your Progress to Date

So much has already happened to you since you began your work with this book that your reading can no longer be the same as it was before you started your training.

Let me ask you to pause for a moment and be quite clear about the changes that are taking place in your reading patterns. Let me point out that complete and spectacular success need not—possibly will not—occur immediately or even while you are in your period of training. While you are working with this book, you will perhaps note only the *beginnings* of new reading patterns and if you permit these patterns to operate, and thereby grow stronger and more habitual, by doing much more reading of all kinds than you have ever done before, and by doing it in the same way you do your reading during your training sessions with this book, then your efficiency in reading will gradually, slowly, but definitely increase.

If you compare your performance a year or two from now with the ability you had and with the performance you were capable of before you picked up this book, the over-all, long-run change will be spectacular. But don't expect a revolution overnight. If you set for yourself such goals as are easily attainable, you will, on the one hand, avoid a feeling of frustration or discouragement; and, on the other, you will receive a growing sense of satisfaction, assurance, and success. Don't, for example, try to double your speed immediately; don't try to stretch your perception span from four digits to seven digits in one session; don't aim to eliminate *all* vocalization, lip movements, regressions, and inner speech at one big jump—don't, in short, expect to become an expert reader in five easy lessons. Take it easy, give yourself enough time and practice and get there by short stages. When you achieve your final goal by these short, sure steps, your achievement will be permanent and efficient; rapid reading will finally be habitual and effortless.

Take your time and work for the long pull. It is impossible for a person of normal intelligence, no matter what his age, *not* to

show improvement in a skill if he keeps practicing regularly under guidance. It is impossible for you *not* to increase your reading speed and efficiency if you apply the guiding principles in this book regularly and patiently. Be a sufficiently strict taskmaster to keep yourself at your training every day, or nearly every day; but do not be so unreasonable a taskmaster as to demand immediate success. Expect plateaus, when no apparent progress occurs, and be patient until the plateau passes. Be satisfied with a 25 per cent increase in speed at this point in your work;<sup>1</sup> be delighted with an increased perception span of one or two digits, expecting eventually to do still better; be elated if you have *slightly* decreased any tendencies to vocalization, motor responses, and regressions; feel triumphant if you have begun to look for main ideas in much of the reading you do; and so on, right down the line.

So let us catalogue the progress you can reasonably expect to have made up to this point:

1. A new attitude to main ideas in your reading.
2. A decrease, however slight, in regressions, vocalizations, lip movements, and inner speech.
3. An initial gain in speed of general reading.
4. An extension, by at least one digit, of your perception span.
5. Somewhat greater ease in perceiving a full phrase in one fixation.
6. The development of regular habits of work and training practice.
7. The beginning of a new attitude toward covering a light novel in a few hours.
8. A general realization that your *potential* reading ability is better than your past performance (before training) may have indicated.
9. A certain freedom from word-by-word reading, from enslavement to unimportant words and minor points in your reading.

Now just reread that list of achievements. When we set them down, they seem fairly impressive, don't they?

Do you remember the self-diagnosis of your reading ability that you made early in your work, when I asked you to check those

<sup>1</sup> If you've done better, fine; but if improvement is in the neighborhood of 25 per cent, be satisfied. After you've completely, comfortably, and permanently achieved an initial increase in speed, you can go on to an additional increase with further training.

qualities you thought you had which are characteristic of the poor reader and those which are characteristic of the efficient reader?

Let me present the chart once again and ask you at this point to make a rediagnosis. After you have checked the proper boxes in this chart, refer to pages 28-30 and note whether you have been willing to revise some of your estimates of your reading performance.

THE POOR READER	THE EFFICIENT READER
<p>Reads slowly, generally about 150 to 200 words per minute. Check here if you think this applies to you. <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Reads at least 400 to 500 words per minute. Check here if you think this applies to you. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Comprehends slowly and inadequately—fails completely to get many of the salient facts. <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Comprehends instantaneously and accurately—loses nothing of importance. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Makes many regressions—that is, must frequently reread words and phrases to gain complete understanding of them. <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Has few if any regressions—immediately grasps the full meaning of a word or phrase at first sight. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Reads word by word or, in extreme cases, syllable by syllable. <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Reads for ideas, is rarely conscious of individual words. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Must move his eyes six or seven times or more in order to cover the average line of print. <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Can absorb an average line of print with two or three eye movements. <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Reads with his eyes, his lips, his tongue, his throat, his vocal chords. <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Reads only with his eyes and mind. <input type="checkbox"/></p>



<p>Reads "passively"—is devoted only to the task of word assimilation.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Reads "actively"—thinks along with the author, interprets, sees pictures, draws his own analogies, agrees or disagrees constantly.</p>
<p>Hears (in his "inner ear") the words he is reading.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Is conscious only of rapid-moving <i>thoughts</i>.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Concentrates imperfectly—is much aware of external noises, sights, happenings.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Concentrates perfectly and with intense absorption.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Carefully covers every single syllable of every word on a page of print.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Skims the unimportant words and ideas.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Fatigues easily because reading is a painful and often puzzling process. A dozen pages, a half-hour, are about all he can stand at one time.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Is practically indefatigable; can—and often does—read a complete book at a single sitting.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Retains only a small fraction of what he has read.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Remembers, sometimes all his life, the flavor, the emotional impact, the striking thoughts of what he reads.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

## 2. Exercises in Rapid Comprehension

I have inhibited, I hope, any tendency you might have to expect too much of yourself, to demand speedier progress than is normal, or to be dissatisfied with anything but complete success overnight. If I have succeeded in my purpose, then you have an excellent mind-set now to continue your training in rapid comprehension.

Again I shall ask you to read a group of selections (some short, some long, and of varying degrees of difficulty), in which you will attempt to find the main thought. Needless to say, you are not to revert to any old habits of slow, dawdling comprehension; instead, understand the selection quickly, look for the main thought, find it, and get out.

As in previous training sessions, note the time at the start of the selection and again at the end;<sup>2</sup> then check your considered choice of the central idea in the piece; finally, determine your rate of speed from the time chart following each selection.

I shall no longer remind you to "read fast"; by now you have matured in your reading attitudes to the point where you are aware that there is no such objective phenomenon as "fast reading." There is "fast perception" and "fast comprehension"; and when you combine the two you have all the circumstances that make efficient reading possible, if not inevitable. So you need not keep telling yourself as you read: "I must go fast, fast, fast. . . ." Such self-urging may lead to tension and thus reduce the ease and smoothness of your comprehension.

Instead, keep training your new habit of pushing through to the gist of the author's ideas rapidly, without waste motion or time lag. Get the main thought: get it as quickly as you *comfortably* can. If you follow this technique properly you'll be aware, not that you're *reading* fast, but that you're *understanding* fast. You'll be avoiding tendencies to auditory responses, vocal responses, motor responses, word-by-word responses, regression responses—in fine, you'll avoid consciousness of all responses but the one vital response: the intellectual and psychological response to the author's main ideas.

Refer, first, to pages 13 and 200 in the book. On page 13 you will find your normal rate established in the initial test, and on page

<sup>2</sup> For suggestions on timing, see page 200.

200 your average rate achieved after training. Copy those statistics in the following table:

INITIAL RATE:	_____ W.P.M.
AVERAGE RATE AFTER TRAINING:	_____ W.P.M.
IMPROVEMENT AFTER TRAINING:	_____ PER CENT

Plot your *initial* rate as a line parallel to *AB* on the new progress graph on page 230, and plot each rate you make in the selections to follow. In this way you will be able to keep a strict tally on your improvement.

Let me remind you of one other thing before you start: Don't be a hog. You may do a little better, or possibly even a lot better, in this second training session than in the first one; or you may do essentially the same. Be quite satisfied if you do the same. The purpose of this second group of training selections is to make your new, faster rate more comfortable, more habitual, more reflexive.

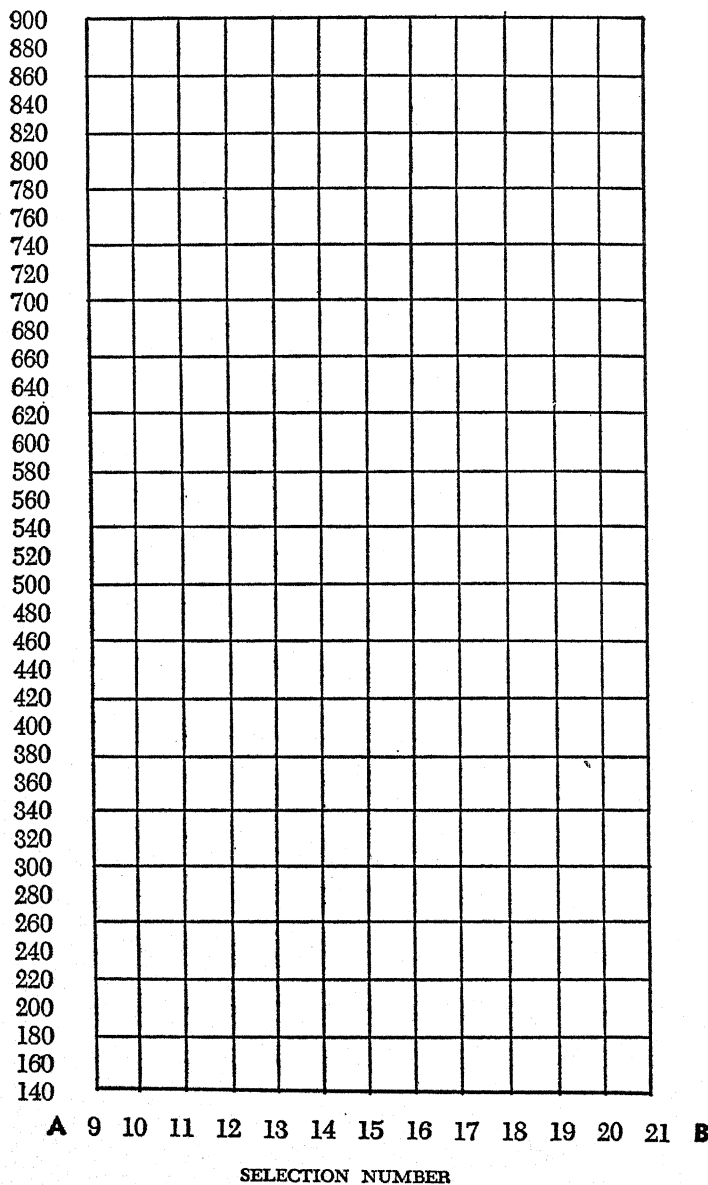
Do not necessarily try to improve upon your initial gain. The more comfortable, more habitual a faster rate becomes for you, the easier it will be to go on to new heights in the reading you do in the months and years after your training with this book is over.

Which is not to be construed as meaning that if you naturally find yourself exceeding your previous training rate you must slow down. Just do what comes naturally, with the emphasis on as rapid a rate of *comprehension* as is comfortable.

If you feel the tendency to skip or skim at various points in your reading, obey the impulse. Skip or skim where comprehension of the main ideas is good, and don't feel guilty about it. Perhaps you have begun to reach the point in your training where you can pay less attention not only to isolated, individual words and syllables but even to unimportant phrases and minor points and ideas that are being repeated.

### PROGRESS GRAPH II

W.P.M.



## Rapid Comprehension Exercise 9

### EFFICIENCY <sup>3</sup>

by Paul F. Watkins

**Start timing**→Like most little tin gods, Efficiency is all right in its place, in the shop, the factory, the store. The trouble with efficiency is that it is a jealous god; it wants to rule our play as well as our work; it won't be content to reign in the shop, it follows us home.

And so we streamline our leisure hours for higher production; live by the clock even when time doesn't matter; standardize and mechanize our homes; speed the machinery of living so that we can go the most places, do the most things in the shortest period of time possible. We even eat, sleep, and loaf efficiently. Even on holidays and Sundays, the efficient man relaxes on schedule with one eye on the clock and the other on an appointment sheet.

To squeeze the most out of each shining hour we have streamlined the opera, condensed the classics, put energy in pellets and culture in pocket-sized packages. We make the busy bee look like an idler, the ant like a sluggard. We live sixty-miles a minute and the great God Efficiency smiles.

We wish we would return to that pleasant day when we considered time a friend instead of a competitor; when we did things spontaneously and because we wanted to; rather than because our schedule called for it. But that of course wouldn't be efficiency. And we Americans must be efficient. ←**End timing**

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. Americans are the most efficient people in the world, both at work and at play.
2. If we are efficient, we will squeeze the most work and pleasure out of every hour.
3. It is all right to be efficient and concerned with time on the

<sup>3</sup> From the *Herald Progress*, Ashland, Virginia. Reprinted with permission.

job; but outside of our working hours we ought to be less a slave to a time schedule.

4. The trouble with us is that we consider time a competitor instead of a friend.

*Key:* Subtract eight from ten and add one to obtain the number of the correct answer.

#### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
20 sec.	798	1 min.	266
30 sec.	532	1 min., 15 sec.	212
40 sec.	399	1 min., 30 sec.	178
50 sec.	318		

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.  
Plot this rate on your progress graph.

### *Rapid Comprehension Exercise 10*

#### COLLEGE GRADS <sup>4</sup>

by Drew Pearson

**Start timing**→The college grad hunting a job next June should consider school teaching. Labor Dept. experts so advise after a study, engineered by Bill Batt, Sec. Tobin's economic consultant.

There will be more degrees than jobs. This year, 169 companies that hired 7,300 last year seek only 5,600 this year.

Tightest fields are chemistry, journalism, law, personnel work, pharmacy, and for a few years, engineering—with 47,000 graduates for 20,000 openings.

Best chances are in school teaching, with a need for 75,000 new ones and only 25,000 applicants; also in medicine, dentistry, nursing, and social workers.

←**End timing**

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_\_ SEC.

<sup>4</sup> From "Washington Merry-Go-Round," a syndicated newspaper feature. Reprinted with permission of the author.

## COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. College graduates will have more difficulty finding jobs than will noncollege people.
2. The greatest demand for college graduates next June will be in the field of teaching.
3. Chemistry and dentistry will be the fields in which the least demands for college graduates will occur.

*Key:* Add one and two and subtract one to determine the number of the correct answer.

### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
6 sec.	1000	13 sec.	458
7 sec.	850	15 sec.	400
8 sec.	750	16 sec.	375
9 sec.	633	18 sec.	333
10 sec.	600	20 sec.	300
11 sec.	545	25 sec.	240
12 sec.	500	30 sec.	200

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

Plot this rate on your progress graph.

## *Rapid Comprehension Exercise 11*

### CALENDAR OF THE SOUL<sup>5</sup>

by Joseph Wood Krutch

**Start timing**→On the first of January nothing happens except to the calendar. The date marks no astronomical event and corresponds to no change in the seasons, either here or anywhere else. The ancient Jews, Egyptians, and Greeks—all of whom put the beginning of the new year in March instead—were following a sound instinct, and so were the Englishmen who for so long stub-

<sup>5</sup> From *The Twelve Seasons*, by Joseph Wood Krutch, copyright 1949 by Joseph Wood Krutch. Reprinted with permission of the publisher, William Sloane Associates, Inc.

bornly refused to change their old custom. Perhaps the world was not actually created for the first time in March of 4004 B.C. (as Archbishop Ussher demonstrated to his own and many people's satisfaction), but March is when it is annually created anew, and that is when the calendar of the soul begins. ←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. The New Year starts on the first of January.
2. Englishmen are similar to the ancient Jews, Egyptians, and Greeks in their stubbornness.
3. Despite the present custom of considering the start of a new year on the first of January, March is really the month when the new year starts, both physically and psychologically.
4. The calendar does not correspond to astronomical events.

*Key:* Subtract four from six and add one to determine the number of the correct answer.

### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
10 sec.	720	25 sec.	288
15 sec.	480	30 sec.	240
20 sec.	360	40 sec.	180

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ W.P.M.  
Plot this rate on your progress graph.

### *Rapid Comprehension Exercise 12*

#### A CHILD'S VOCABULARY <sup>6</sup>

by Anna Perrott Rose

**Start timing**→It was through Jimmy John that I discovered that a vocabulary is an outgrowth of experience. As fast as he learned

<sup>6</sup> From "Jimmy John," in the *Ladies' Home Journal*. Reprinted by permission of the author.



some activity, he acquired without effort the vocabulary that went with it. From the pony he learned saddle, bridle, stirrup, blacksmith, and so on, although to begin with he had hidden from our pet in terror, with absolutely no words to describe anything about him. After a summer of sailing he unconsciously acquired nautical terms as a matter of course. But when we tried to increase his vocabulary by making him memorize words arbitrarily, he became confused and mixed them all up and misused them amusingly. The first time he saw a funeral procession he asked, "What's dat?" and someone said, "It's a hearse." Now it happened that Jimmy John had not been looking at the hearse when this was said. His attention had focused on an Army officer in the procession. Some time later he announced that there was a hearse in front of our house and when we peered out, rather alarmed, we saw a soldier standing there talking calmly to someone. No hearse anywhere.

I then realized that you can't make a child merely memorize words; he has to live them, and therefore many experiences are vital to the growth of a child's vocabulary. I suppose all educators know this but, when I found it out for myself, I felt as if I had discovered a new continent. I dare say a good many parents do not realize this, nor do they know that by limiting their offsprings' activities they may, to say the least, be reducing their children's chances for a good showing in those "aptitude tests" which come later and depend so much on a good vocabulary. Jimmy John educated me, I think, more than I ever educated him!

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. A child with a poor vocabulary is not very intelligent.
2. A child's vocabulary comes from experience—he has to live the words he learns.
3. A child with a poor vocabulary will not pass "aptitude tests."
4. Children educate their parents more often than the other way around.

*Key:* Add four and one and subtract three to determine the number of the correct answer.

#### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
20 sec.	930	1 min., 10 sec.	265
30 sec.	620	1 min., 15 sec.	248
40 sec.	465	1 min., 20 sec.	231
1 min.	310	1 min., 30 sec.	206
1 min., 5 sec.	288	1 min., 40 sec.	186

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.  
Plot this rate on your progress graph.

### *Rapid Comprehension Exercise 13*

IT AIN'T THE LENGTH, IT'S THE OBSCURITY <sup>7</sup>

**Start timing**→We hear from a friend to the following effect: "In your editorial column, you guys have now and then expressed great scorn of windy language, big \$7 words, and other methods of concealing thought or lack of thought. Well, browsing through recent editorials of yours, I have come across such things as 'intolerable,' 'incompatibility,' 'vulnerable,' 'genocide,' and several other biggies. Ain't going highhat on us, be ye?"

Nope, we ain't; at least, not intentionally. If now and then we let an overstuffed word fall into this column, maybe it's because our inborn culchaw and refeenment just overcome us from time to time.

We do think, though, that this aspect of the use of language is not as simple as the mere difference in length between a word of four letters and one of 12, 15 or 18.

For illustration, here are some shorties which we'd call real \$7 words, and wouldn't use here at this time without explanation: adit, erg, ergo, ohm, gloze, cozen, griff, modal, mure, snash, viable.

Those are all perfectly good English or Scotch words (except ergo—it's Latin, meaning therefore); likewise clean. But they're \$7 words or worse, as we figure it, because so few people know what they mean. When you're writing for the general public, the

<sup>7</sup> An editorial in the New York *Daily News*. Reprinted with permission.

main object is to use language which that public can understand at a glance, without having to go grubbing into a dictionary to find out what in the blue blazes you are trying to say.

But there are plenty of big, long, many-syllable words which almost everybody who can read understands. We submit that three of the four specimens listed above by our pal and critic are widely understood.

Breathes there a reader who doesn't know that "intolerable" means "unbearable"?—though we must admit we prefer the latter.

"Incompatibility" is a widely familiar word because of the many divorce suits brought on grounds of incompatibility—meaning two married persons just can't get along together. Bridge is a tremendously popular card game; hence "vulnerable" is a well-known word to millions of people.

"Genocide" is something else again, and we'll admit we muffed a ball when we dropped that one into this column without explaining what it meant. Sorry, and we'll try not to let such a thing happen again. Here's the dope on "genocide." It's a new word, of Latin derivation, and it means murder of a whole racial or other human group. It originated, to the best of our information, at the Nurnberg trials of the German war criminals.

There are whole battalions of words in common use nowadays which wouldn't have meant much, if anything, to Samuel Johnson and Noah Webster, two famous dictionary makers of generations gone by—only they called themselves lexicographers.

Among these are "fission," used in connection with the atom; "blooper," when you're discussing baseball; "airborne," which is what a plane is when it gets safely off the ground; "chairborne," which is a popular word in modern wars to describe officers who never hear a shot fired in anger from start to finish of the fracas.

In the gobbledygook of diplomats and bureaucrats, there are any number of big, fat blimps of words. Among these, the three that make us maddest are "quadripartite," "unilateral" and "directive." Why the boys can't just say "four-party," "onesided" and "order" is beyond us—unless, as some suspect, most present-day diplomats and bureaucrats aim with malice aforethought to confuse and befuddle the general public.

To make this subject of big and little words still more fascinating, there is the fact that most people are well aware of the meaning and historical background of the very longest non-scientific word of all in current dictionaries. That one, of course, is "antidisestab-

lishmentarianism"—and most of us know what it means simply because it has been so widely hailed as the champ. Huge though old anti-etc. is, he is in no way a \$7 word.

So we'd say, about this part of the technic of using the English language, that it isn't the size of a word which should rule it out of newspapers, but its obscurity. If most people know what it means, go ahead and use it, no matter how big it is; otherwise, blackball it, or be polite enough to the readers to dub in an explanation in parentheses if you feel you've got to use it.

This answer the question?

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_\_ SEC.

### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. The editors are sorry that they have used long words in the past and will not do so in the future.

2. If a word is English or Scotch, rather than Latin, it may be used in the paper's editorial columns no matter how long it is.

3. Diplomats use long and obscure words to confuse the general public.

4. A word may be long and still fully comprehensible to the readers of the paper; or it may be short and difficult to understand. Size by itself is no criterion of obscurity.

*Key:* Add two and three and subtract one to determine the number of the correct answer.

### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
1 min.	770	2 min., 15 sec.	344
1 min., 10 sec.	660	2 min., 30 sec.	308
1 min., 20 sec.	579	2 min., 45 sec.	280
1 min., 30 sec.	514	3 min.	257
1 min., 40 sec.	462	3 min., 30 sec.	220
1 min., 50 sec.	420	4 min.	193
2 min.	385		

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

Plot this rate on your progress graph.

## Rapid Comprehension Exercise 14

### BANGLING THE LANGUAGE

by Norman Cousins <sup>8</sup>

**Start timing**→For some years, the popular impression has prevailed that the English-American language has been steadily expanding in range, variety, and color. Every so often we see impressive lists of new words which, with the blessings of the lexicographers, have passed into the bloodstream of the general vocabulary. But very little is said about the fact that many useful words are dying out each year—not because they lack value or vitality but because of increasingly lazy habits of writing and speaking.

For the fact remains that our language may actually be shrinking—despite the highly publicized stream of new recruits drawn regularly from slang, sports, entertainment, new trades, and current events. This shrinkage is represented by the loss of thousands of pithy, precise, essential words—words which, in a sort of Gresham's law applied to vocabulary, have been driven out over the years by flat, juiceless expressions. A recent edition of Shakespeare, for example, provided explanations for twenty-four hundred words\* which had long since passed out of general usage. True, a large number of these words deserved to die, either because they were replaced by sharper, more satisfying words, or because they were strictly a product of their times. But this still leaves a fair number of words which are as indispensable to the language today as they were when Shakespeare used them.

Could anyone think of a better word for defining someone who steals house servants out from under the unsuspecting noses of his best friends than the word *slockster*? This is not slang but a lost word from standard Anglo-Saxon English. Is there a better verb to describe the act of pushing and poking about in a crowd than the verb *to prog*? Is there any excuse for using the expression "petty liar" when the correct but forgotten word for it is *fibster*? Is there any single word in use today that can express more readily the

<sup>8</sup> Reprinted from the *Saturday Review of Literature* with permission. Mr. Cousins is the editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature* and author of *Modern Man Is Obsolete*.

\* The working vocabulary of the average high-school student has been estimated at 6,000 words.

ability of the fingers to enable the brain to recognize objects through touch alone than the lost word *felth*? And what a shorter way of referring to an unweaned infant than the old word *suckerel*? Or *taverner* for tavern-keeper? Or *nappy* for mid-day sleepiness?

If economy of expression is a virtue, then we have injured the language through the loss through disuse of such words as *flinders* (combining fragments and splinters); *janglesome* (combining nerve-wracking and quarrelsome); *lanken* (combining leanness and lankiness); *keek* (combining peeping with slyness); *maffle* (combining stammering and blundering); *sloomy* (combining dullness, laziness, heaviness, and sleepiness all at once).

Only sloominess in our thinking could be responsible for the fact that although we use the word "smattering" we have neglected the much more useful noun from which it is derived, *smatters*, to describe small matters or trifles. Similarly, we use the trite expression "smash it to smithereens," but overlook the word *smithier*, an excellent way of describing a tiny fragment. The word "ungainly" is in common usage today but not so its affirmative opposite, *gainly*, a handy way of describing someone who is shapely, elegant, provocative. The word "same" has an equally useful variant, *samely*, which can be used instead of the phrase "always the same." We use "bereave," but what about *reave*? ("To *reave* the orphan of his patrimony"—Shakespeare's "Henry VI.")

In the matter of precision, is there any one word that describes an attitude not so strong as the word dislike but stronger than the word indifferent? Yes; the word is *mislike*. Incidentally, there is a long list of other words which, combined with the prefix *mis*, make for an effective and lucid use of English. *Misproud*—proud for the wrong reason; *misgo*—arrive at the wrong place; *misexpense*—using money for the wrong purposes; *misbelieve*—to acquire mistaken convictions; *mislive*—to lead a wasted life; *misfare*—to have things turn out poorly; etc.

If one of the proofs of a virile language is its ability to generate verbs with striking power and pithiness, then we have been enfeebling English by neglecting such trenchant verbs as *to tolter*—move with slowness and heaviness; *to strome*—walk up and down while pondering some decision; *to rax*—reach and stretch at the same time; *to bangle*—fritter away an inheritance by carelessness and stupidity; *to gowl*—weep in anger rather than sorrow; *to spuddle*—assume pompous airs in the execution of a minor mission; *to stodge*—overstuff grotesquely; *to thrump*—bump into

people in a crowd; to *slorp*—eat gluttonously and with monstrous sound effects.

Picturesque, time-saving expressions we have bangled over the years would include *barrel-fever* or *jug-bitten* to describe the disease of alcoholism, or, even more directly, the noun *bouse*, which combines souse and booze. *Knee-crooking* is probably the etymological ancestor of the expression "brown-nosing," so commonly used in the recent war to describe self-debasement in honeying up to a superior. *Forswat and forswunk* is a good phrase to describe someone who is grimy and sweaty after he emerges from a long day's toil in the coal pits. The word *fluttersome* could hardly be improved upon for a picture of someone gadding about at a party talking with much emotion and little sense. The victims of such flutterers would aptly be termed *tirelings*. Those who can converse only by arguing and snapping and by exhibiting their tempers would be described as *toitish*.

In no branch of language is there greater need for endless reinforcements than the uncomplimentary reference. Consider these lost gems: *gowk*—an open-mouthed fool; *jabbernowle*—a slow thinker and a bore; *chuff*—a Shakespearian favorite to describe someone who converts his extra wealth into extra chins; *mome*—someone not quite arrived at, but well on his way to, the status of a blockhead; *sumph*—the same man upon becoming a blockhead; *scroil*—a slick, mean fellow; *bummel*—a small-time tramp; *dumble*—short for dumbbell.

Is it too much to hope that words such as these may be restored to the language? Far from it; we have only to consider that a large number of words which had virtually disappeared towards the end of the nineteenth century have been since rediscovered and are in common use today: *deft*, *blurt*, *gab*, *kindle*, *glower*, *glamor*, *hotfoot*, *grub*, *grip*, *malodorous*, *forbear*, *foreword*, *afterword*, *lush*, *reek*, *pixie*, *quash*, *runt*, *sheen*, *sag*, *sleuth*, *slick*, *snack*, *uncanny*, *tinsel*, *snarl*, *bolt*, *imp*, *tryste*, *sliver*, *slogan*, *kink*, *dump*, *croon*, *cleave*, *mole*, *monger*.

The value of new or rediscovered words is not that they add to the language but that they enlarge one's choice in speaking or writing with greater precision, suppleness, color. Certainly no one wants to be *word-ridden*, a lost but handy word describing a slave to words for words' sake. They used to tell the story, incidentally, about the English fishwife who looked on blandly when Daniel O'Connor, accused her in court of being a perjurer, thief,

strumpet, and procurer, but who put her foot down when he called her a parallelogram.

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. We don't have enough words in our language.
2. New words don't have the impact of old ones.
3. High school students cannot understand Shakespeare because we have lost so many Shakespearian terms from the language.
4. Our language may be shrinking and losing some of its force because of the thousands of old words that are no longer used; but perhaps we will rediscover some of them and thereby be able to add precision, suppleness, and color to our speaking and writing.

*Key:* Subtract five from eight and add one.

### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
1 min., 30 sec.	850	5 min.	255
2 min.	638	5 min., 30 sec.	232
2 min., 30 sec.	510	6 min.	213
3 min.	425	6 min., 30 sec.	196
3 min., 30 sec.	364	7 min.	182
4 min.	319	8 min.	159
4 min., 30 sec.	284		

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ W.P.M.  
Plot this rate on your progress graph.



## Rapid Comprehension Exercise 15

TO BE FRANK

by Frank Kingdon <sup>9</sup>

**Start timing**→I would like to go on record as saying that I am sick and tired of the Aga Khan, Aly Khan, their Begums, their matrimonial flipperies, their weights, their horses, their jewels, and their whole kit and kaboodle. If I never saw another line about these refugees from responsibility who squander the gifts brought them by ignorant and superstitious people they have been at no pains to educate or enlighten I should not feel that anything of importance was missing from my life.

They represent the essence of vulgarity. There is no vulgarity about poverty which has been forced on somebody by misfortune, ill-luck, or the circumstances of life; there is no vulgarity more complete than riches used for nothing but display and personal indulgence. There is nothing vulgar about illiteracy where opportunity for learning has been denied; there is an ultimate vulgarity about educated minds with no thoughts beyond their own sensual satisfactions.

Maybe I should run with my tongue hanging out to slobber over every titled pensioner of exploited people who has run away from his duty and his office. I must report that I find nothing to honor in them. I want some distinction higher than descent from Fatima to command my respect. I do not thrill with the thought of a man who gave up his throne but still collects his income from the people he refused to serve. The sycophants of privilege who toady to these decadent sprouts of historic heritage I find nauseating.

When I read that a woman has been robbed of jewels I join with all who cry that the criminals must be punished. When I go a little further and find that the estimated value of these gim-cracks in her bags varies from \$450,000 to \$800,000 I can only guess at what the paltry \$350,000 difference means among such friends.

When I lay the story aside I am left with the question whether anybody has any right to own so much conspicuous waste, and whether the first antisocial feature is not here. I don't think people

<sup>9</sup> From the *New York Post*. Reprinted with permission of the author. Dr. Kingdon is a columnist on the *Post*.

should be allowed to go around robbing begums, but I still wonder whether there ought to be begums to rob.

I hope nobody will dub me a killjoy, or think me a pompous ass, but I cannot read such stuff without my gorge rising at the injustice it represents. I do not believe this kind of wasteful wealth can be publicized without leaving a rancor in the minds of those who read it.

Human beings may be such snobs that they revel in descriptions of these fabulous wastrels, but I doubt it. I think these human jewel cases are symptoms of something rotten in the state of our society and I believe their antics will stir a resentment that will some day happily eliminate them.

Winston Churchill once called Gandhi a "naked fakir." The phrase was intended to demolish the Mahatma. I would put the "naked fakir," who went back to his people and lived among them, in the scales against the berobed and bejewelled Aga, who lives as a voluptuary far from his people, and I will throw in with him all his possessions, and know with certainty that the scale with the prince will rise as though he were a sparrow's feather.

If any one can qualify for oblivion, the Aga can. ←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. Dr. Kingdon doesn't like titled nobility.
2. Dr. Kingdon does not cherish the memory of Gandhi.
3. Dr. Kingdon thinks that people who rob vast wealth should not be punished too severely.
4. Dr. Kingdon finds that people of vast wealth are antisocial.
5. Dr. Kingdon thinks that people of vast wealth who contribute nothing to society and fail of their duty to mankind are symptoms of something rotten in our society.
6. Dr. Kingdon believes that robbery of unproductive people of great wealth should be severely punished.

*Key:* Add two and four and subtract one.

### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
50 sec.	708	2 min.	295
1 min.	590	2 min., 30 sec.	236
1 min., 15 sec.	472	3 min.	197
1 min., 30 sec.	394	3 min., 30 sec.	168
1 min., 45 sec.	336		

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.  
Plot this rate on your progress graph.

### *Rapid Comprehension Exercise 16*

#### RETALIATION REACTION

by James Sonnett Greene, M.D.<sup>10</sup>

**Start timing**→An old precept admonishes us to count ten before acting in anger. I thought of that recently when someone I had liked and trusted took advantage of that trust to advance himself personally, at my expense. My first reaction was to retaliate, but having learned from sad experience the folly of acting destructively when in an emotional state, I turned my mobilized energies into a quite different channel and accomplished a task I had been trying to get to for several days.

This is a type of experience that everyone goes through many times in his life, and the typical first reaction is one of retaliation. If we analyze this reaction, we find that the only thing we are really seeking at the moment, and the only thing we accomplish for ourselves by retaliation, is release of the tension that the situation has built up in us. But we accomplish this usually at the expense of erasing any feelings of guilt or remorse the other fellow may have, and thus our retaliatory reaction, far from "paying him back," actually plays into the other person's hands.

We can release tension just as well by other types of action and with real reward to ourselves. The best way is to utilize the energy that has been mobilized by our anger to counteract, by some constructive action, the harm that the other person has done

<sup>10</sup> From *Talk*. Reprinted by permission. The late Dr. Greene was Medical Director of the National Hospital for Speech Disorders, 61 Irving Place, New York 3, N.Y., and editor of its official publication, *Talk*.

us. If this is impossible, the energy should be drained off in some other useful activity. But for many reasons—and if for no other, then for purely selfish ones—we should not react destructively.

The important thing is to realize in our moment of anger that our adrenal glands have flooded us with energy which demands an “out,” and that to play safe we should release it immediately into some constructive channel. By immediately drawing off the “charge,” we avoid the danger of explosion with all its potentialities for harmful consequences to ourselves and others.

In brief, when angry emotion is aroused act quickly—but not in retaliation. *War never pays!*

→End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. When angered by someone's actions, drain off excessive energy not in retaliation; but in constructive action or useful activity.
2. Before retaliating, think of whether you will serve yourself or the person who angered you.
3. When angered, do not try to release your tension suddenly. Instead, let it drain off slowly and gradually.
4. When angry emotion is aroused, act quickly, either in retaliation or in forgiveness.

*Key:* Subtract four from six and then subtract one more.

### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
30 sec	700	1 min., 20 sec.	264
40 sec.	525	1 min., 30 sec.	234
50 sec.	420	1 min., 40 sec.	210
1 min.	350	1 min., 50 sec.	192
1 min., 10 sec.	300	2 min.	175

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ W.P.M.  
Plot this rate on your progress graph.

## *Rapid Comprehension Exercise 17*

JIMMY CANNON SAYS <sup>11</sup>

by Jimmy Cannon

**Start timing**→Long ago, I emancipated myself from the customs of New Year's Eve and, on this night committed to frivolity, I become a recluse and embrace the solitude of my apartment. I must suspect any fete that depends upon the blowing of horns and the assumption that a paper hat indicates happiness. The world is not made for strangers and on New Year's Eve public inns and house parties are populated by rude aliens who are dedicated to good fellowship, especially if you are the escort of a reasonably-attractive girl. Friendship goes for nothing on this night and knowledge of a man's character doesn't count because the manners of New Year's Eve eventually force every man to be your foe and turn your intimates into hostile strangers.

On this night, for some unaccountable reason, the soberest and most chivalrous of gentlemen believe they have a license to get out of line and fortunate is the fellow whose beloved believes that flirting is as far as she wants to go. It is part of the tradition of the occasion that the celebrants get loaded to the wig as rapidly as possible. Graceful drinking becomes a disgrace and a guy who holds his liquor with style is suspected of having a lousy time.

So the average guy paints himself wild and believes it is a crime against human nature to be pleasantly bagged on New Year's Eve. Such a theory produces many a tussle and breaks up as many homes as poverty. I have found it is impossible to associate with anyone on this night and, to avoid mix-ups, I settle down early and alone. It is the only way I know how to beat it.

Even the sensible drinker, who understands his capacity and knows how to gait himself, usually goes along with the fools. It is a form of self-preservation, but the result is similar to that achieved by the senseless lush and there are few pleasant drinkers to be found after midnight on New Year's Eve. Even the most durable rum pails turn surly and mean because the pace is unnatural and made for sprinters, not distant rummies. So no matter where you go, among strangers or friends, you buck guys who are concerned only with making spectacles of themselves. What

<sup>11</sup> Reprinted from the *New York Post*, with permission of the author.

happens figures. If you don't put in with my theory, look around you and count how many refuse to wear the hats or discard the horns without sounding off. Need more proof?

Such behaviour creates hangovers and, on New Year's Day, it is only logical to suppose the majority of the celebrants are sick and crippled from fun. Alcoholic invalids find it difficult to commit their signature to paper and the most difficult of all New Year's Day chores is the composition of penitent communiques which explain that all that happened the night before was splendid fun and not intended to offend anyone. It is necessary that these messages express regret and suggest the feeling of brotherhood, but such phrases are hard to dislocate when they are embedded in a whiskey-damaged mind. If you don't have to apologize, according to the standards of the holiday, you had a miserable time.

Western Union gives special rates for stock messages to celebrate most holidays, but they don't include in their bargain catalogue a series which apologize for acts committed on New Year's Eve. I suggest this to their sales department without charge, but, until this idea is accepted, I offer a plan. Sit down and write your messages before going out on Dec. 31 and leave them on the night table. All you have to do is fill in the names and addresses of the offended parties on New Year's Day and call a boy.

In every night club in the country, the great acts of show business are put on exhibition at New Year's Eve. Many a man deprives himself of the necessities and chisels on his lunch money and walks when he should take the subway in order to go to a night club. Some make this their only visit to a cafe during a year and for the next 52 weeks will drop into the conversation how they enjoyed the art of an act they couldn't see or hear.

The rates go up on New Year's Eve and it is a pretty good clout to buy a couple of chairs and a tiny table in a night club. The acts playing the place are the attraction which bring in the customers, but this is the most uncouth and brutal audience of the year. Guys who save up to hear such an act often are laid out on the couch in the men's room with cold towels on their head when the show goes on.

The audience competes with the people they are paying to hear and usually the conversations are so loud it is impossible to hear the actors even when a public address system is used. On other nights such deportment would not be tolerated and the head waiter would call the cop on the beat.

The rest of the year a guy would be barred forever more if he

came up to you and threw a handful of confetti into your face, blew a blast from a horn into your ear, insisted upon joining your party or cut into strange couples dancing on the floor. This is believed to be part of the joy of New Year's and happens frequently. But it is not universally accepted yet and a census of the black eyes on New Year's Day would bear out my claim. → **End timing**

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. People act in many uncouth, abnormal, and unfriendly ways on New Year's Eve, apparently believing that such behavior is a requisite for having a good time—but Jimmy Cannon will have none of it and therefore celebrates the evening alone.

2. New Year's Eve is the only time when people really and happily lose their inhibitions, according to Jimmy Cannon.

3. If you let yourself go, says Jimmy Cannon, you can have the time of your life on New Year's Eve and remember it for the rest of the year.

4. Western Union ought to have special messages for making apologies for New Year's Eve behavior, opines Jimmy Cannon.

5. Audiences are particularly discourteous to night-club entertainers on New Year's Eve, Jimmy Cannon has observed.

**Key:** Subtract four from five to determine the number of the correct answer.

### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
1 min.	960	2 min., 30 sec.	384
1 min., 10 sec.	822	2 min., 45 sec.	348
1 min., 20 sec.	720	3 min.	320
1 min., 30 sec.	640	3 min., 15 sec.	296
1 min., 40 sec.	576	3 min., 30 sec.	274
1 min., 50 sec.	524	4 min.	240
2 min.	480	4 min., 30 sec.	214
2 min., 15 sec.	428	5 min.	192

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

Plot this rate on your progress graph.

## Rapid Comprehension Exercise 18

### GREEN LIGHT MEANS DANGER <sup>12</sup>

by William S. Dutton

**Start timing**→She had the green light. Confidently she drove her black sedan out onto the six-lane highway to cross. It never occurred to her to look to the left, the most likely point of danger.

On the main highway a speeding driver saw, too late, the red light commanding him to stop. He jammed on his brakes, and his tires shrieked as if in horror at the impending crash. The woman was killed instantly. He died that night.

Indignant witnesses blamed the man alone; he had broken a law. In grim reality she was equally to blame, for if she had but looked to the left, there would have been no accident. She had placed too much trust in a green light and in her fellow drivers.

That fault today, common to most of us, is one of the largest contributors to our mounting motor casualty lists, according to two of the newest studies of how and where fatal accidents happen. The message of these studies is that a green light means not safety, but: *Beware of death!*

Wilmington, Delaware, made the initial study. It embraced 15 years, 1,606 intersections and revealed that the danger ratio at light-controlled crossings, in terms of deaths, was 8.65 times higher than at unmarked and unguarded crossings in that city.

Moreover, both the number and severity of accidents grew as the traffic controls moved up from none to slow signs, to stop signs, to lights. For every one death at unmarked crossings, 2.27 occurred at crossings marked slow. At stop streets, 3.51.

The amazed Wilmington engineers asked the Philadelphia Bureau of Traffic Engineering to make a similar study as a check. The larger survey covered one year and 9,294 intersections of all kinds. The death ratio at light-controlled crossings as compared to those unmarked was slightly *higher* than Wilmington's.

In Texas, records of the state police show that more than 80 percent of its highway deaths there are the result of motorists or others violating some traffic law or control.

<sup>12</sup> From *Collier's*, copyright 1949 by The Crowell-Collier Publishing Co. Reprinted with permission.



Only rarely are these violations deliberate. They happen every day in every community. And because to err is human, all the controls and police in the land can't put a stop to them. Each of us who drives becomes, by the law of averages, a potential if unwilling killer.

What to do about it?

"When you reach a corner and another car is approaching fast from a crossroad, let him cross first even if you have the right of way," warns the National Safety Council of Chicago.

"We (and this means all of us) must change our thinking on traffic controls," says E. F. Koester, Wilmington's chief engineer. "Controls don't end danger. They proclaim it."

No control is put up without strong reason. That reason is usually a record of previous accidents at that crossing. Lights, the most arbitrary control, proclaim the greatest need for caution. The turn from yellow to green means to proceed with eyes open and wits alert, for here people have been killed and maimed—or they may be.

The exact opposite attitude is assumed by most drivers toward controls, Mr. Koester says.

Our mistaken notion of controls is reflected in neighborhood agitations for traffic lights as soon as a few bad accidents happen at a local corner. Mothers especially seem to think that their children will be safe if they "wait for the green light." Schools teach pupils this fallacy. The teaching is good only in part. Its emphasis is wrong, creating a false sense of security that makes the child, and later the adult, the easy victim of the first driver who didn't see that the red light was against him until too late.

The feeling of safety, now induced by lights and other controls that are actually warnings, is our greatest traffic hazard of all, and it will continue to be until we change our views. ← **End timing**

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. It is safer to cross *against* the green light than *with* the green light.
2. The green light gives us a false sense of security. We should

be just as careful when the green light is in our favor as we are when no traffic signal governs an intersection.

3. There are more deaths at traffic-light intersections than at uncontrolled intersections.

4. Schools and parents teach children wrong concepts about traffic.

*Key:* Subtract one from five and then subtract two to determine the number of the correct answer.

#### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
50 sec.	804	2 min., 15 sec.	300
1 min.	670	2 min., 30 sec.	268
1 min., 15 sec.	536	2 min., 45 sec.	244
1 min., 30 sec.	448	3 min.	224
1 min., 45 sec.	384	3 min., 15 sec.	210
2 min.	335	3 min., 30 sec.	198

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

Plot this rate on your progress graph.

### *Rapid Comprehension Exercise 19*

#### SPEECH PATTERNS <sup>13</sup>

**Start timing**→Literally putting out his tongue at his audience, Dr. Cyril Darlington, a fellow of the Royal Society, a geneticist, declared that language and dialect and speech characteristics depended on heredity.

He said that it now had been well established by work on blood groups—as a result of blood transfusion work in the war more than 4,000,000 persons in Britain alone had been grouped—that there was a definite connection between genetic characteristics and language. Different human groups have different tongue and throat formations that he said are transmitted by parents.

To demonstrate this, he pushed out his tongue in the form of a cylinder and challenged his audience to try it. He said half of them would be able to do it and the other half would not.

To support his claim of the relation of language to genetics, he

<sup>13</sup> Excerpted from a news item in *The New York Times*. Reprinted with permission of the *Times*.

took the sound "th" and showed that, far from being an Anglo-Saxon characteristic as generally supposed, it extended from Iceland through Norway, Denmark, Britain, Spain, Greece, the Levant, South Arabia, South India, Burma and Siam into China. In fact, he declared, it corresponds accurately with the geographic distribution of the O blood group.

Dr. Darlington also asserted that in families, the children in learning to speak had characteristic impediments that represented individual expression of a genotype and could be identified with the parental genes.

Dialects, he added, are not just acquired habits of locality but a definite expression of local or regional characteristics arising from hereditary types produced by intermarriage. Heredity, as much as local loyalties, resists the pressure of dialect change, he maintained, saying that continuing work on blood group distribution would definitely establish a connection between heredity and the character of language.

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. Dr. Darlington was discourteous to his audience.
2. Dr. Darlington suggested that parents should train their children to avoid using dialects.
3. Dr. Darlington claimed that the speech pattern is linked to heredity, that tongue and throat formations are transmitted from parents to offspring.
4. Dr. Darlington stated that environment was more important than heredity in determining the speech characteristics of people.

**Key:** Subtract one from four to determine the correct answer.

### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
30 sec.	654	1 min., 10 sec.	282
40 sec.	492	1 min., 20 sec.	246
50 sec.	391	1 min., 30 sec.	218
1 min.	327	1 min., 40 sec.	197

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

Plot this rate on your progress graph.

## Rapid Comprehension Exercise 20

### THE I.Q. AND SCHOOLING

by Dr. Benjamin Fine<sup>14</sup>

**Start timing**→For many years educators and psychologists have insisted that the I. Q. remains constant. Allowance was made for slight variations, perhaps five to ten points, but this was termed the "margin of error." Basically, the belief existed that a person retained the amount of brains that nature endowed him with, and that very little could be done about it. Most textbooks on the subject upheld that belief.

Now this position is seriously questioned. A twenty-year study, conducted by Dr. Irving Lorge, head of the educational research institute at Teachers College, Columbia University, presents evidence that the intelligence quotient fluctuates with the amount of education an individual attains. A report of that study is published in the May issue of the Teachers College Record.

Dr. Lorge set out to discover whether a group of individuals tested twenty years ago had the same intelligence quotients today. In doing so he tested not only the individuals but also the theory that a boy, say, who had an I. Q. of 110 at the age of 14, would have the same I. Q., with slight variation, at the age of 34.

It did not turn out that way. Those who had additional years of schooling had raised their I. Q.'s by as much as fifteen or twenty points—with due allowance for the margin of error.

Here is the way Dr. Lorge came to his far-reaching conclusions: he compared sets of boys who, twenty years ago, were matched at the same intelligence score, let us say at 105. But one of the boys had continued his schooling and completed a four-year college course. The other boy had stopped at the end of elementary school. This boy retained his 105 I. Q.—he did not go backward. The student who had gone to college had raised his to 125. That was not according to the books.

Subsidized by the Carnegie Corporation, the study began in 1921, under the direction of Prof. Edward L. Thorndike, when a representative sampling of 863 boys in the eighth grade of New

<sup>14</sup> From *The New York Times*, reprinted with permission of the *Times* and the author. Dr. Fine is Education Editor of the *Times* and author of a series of articles on "The Crisis in American Education."

York City's public elementary schools received series of tests for abstract intelligence, mechanical adroitness and clerical ability.

In May, 1941, as the twentieth year of the experiment came to a close, Dr. Lorge, who by that time had succeeded Dr. Thorndike at Teachers College, invited the original group to come to the college for a retesting. In all, 131 responded, enough to provide a reliable cross-section of the original group, and thus of the larger student body.

In essence, the study showed that the men who had gone to college made higher ratings on their intelligence tests than those who had not. Strikingly enough, even as little as a year of schooling raised the I. Q. And the more education a person received, the higher his I. Q. became.

For example, a boy who at the age of 14 had an intelligence quotient of 100, raised that score to 115 or 120 by going to school. On the other hand, another boy who stopped going to school at the end of the eighth grade retained his 100 I. Q. While his intelligence score did not improve, neither did it go down.

According to Dr. Lorge, the mental ages of the men who completed three years or more of college are two full years higher than those of the men who completed less than two years of high school. Men who had equal intelligence at the age of 14 revealed striking differences at age 34, depending upon the amount of education received in the meantime.

In other words, while the intellectual ability of a person is not lost as he grows older even though he does not go to school, his full abilities are not realized. It is not true that a boy who comes up the "hard way" has the same advantages as the person who receives formal schooling. However, even though education makes a profound difference, Dr. Lorge warns that "it would be overly optimistic to expect it to change the least able into the most able."

"An adult's measured mental ability is related to his intelligence as a boy and to the extent of his subsequent schooling," Dr. Lorge comments.

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

## COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. College graduates have higher I. Q.'s than uneducated people.
2. Very little can be done about a person's brain power—he has what nature endowed him with.
3. Education can change the least able into the most able.
4. The I. Q. can be increased by schooling, for through education a person's full abilities are realized.
5. A person's I. Q. remains fairly constant over a twenty-year period.

**Key:** Subtract three from five and add two to determine the number of the correct answer.

### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
40 sec.	939	1 min., 50 sec.	342
50 sec.	750	2 min.	313
1 min.	626	2 min., 15 sec.	278
1 min., 10 sec.	517	2 min., 30 sec.	250
1 min., 20 sec.	470	2 min., 45 sec.	228
1 min., 30 sec.	418	3 min.	208
1 min., 40 sec.	375		

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.  
Plot this rate on your progress graph.

### *Rapid Comprehension Exercise 21*

WHAT? YOU A QUIZ CLANSMAN?

by Murray Robinson<sup>15</sup>

**Start timing**→A customer walked into a neighborhood candy store in Brooklyn and said: "I want a pint of coffee ice cream."

The proprietor, a party named Max, deftly cracked a pistachio nut, spat out the shell, chewed, swallowed, and replied: "If I had

<sup>15</sup> From the New York *World-Telegram and Sun*. Reprinted with permission. Mr. Robinson is a staff writer for the *World-Telegram and Sun*.

coffee flavor, wouldn't I give *you*? What am I in business for?"

The customer, who could take a hint, said: "All right, butter pecan'll do."

Max cracked another pistachio and looked dolefully at the customer.

"Does anybody around this here neighborhood ever want butter pecan?" he answered. "Why should I keep butter pecan if I couldn't sell a pint, even, in a whole month?"

The customer reared. "Who wants to hear your troubles?" he demanded. "Don't you think I have troubles of my own?"

Max looked at him with sudden interest and respect. The customer was now speaking his language—questions, nothing but questions.

"You think you got troubles?" Max asked heatedly, but with evident relish. "Did you every try THIS lousy business? Do customers want something I got in stock? Why do they always want something I ain't got?"

Max's wife, who had been arranging halvah on the counter, cracked a pistachio loudly for attention.

"Max," she said, "are you forgetting what the doctor said? Why do you have to get so excited?"

The customer departed, and, as he walked away, he tallied the score. Max had spoken three times. Nothing but questions. His wife had spoken once—and had asked two. And the customer himself had fallen into the question habit after two affirmative statements.

Max and his wife are but two members of a strange cult spread all over New York City—the Quiz Clan. They're the people who answer questions with other questions. Under peril of losing their franchise, they never make a flat statement.

This phenomenon makes strangers blow their gaskets, but the clan members consider it a test of wit, a delicate fencing game.

Take two sportsmen of the Quiz Clan who meet at the races. Their conversation goes like this:

First Sportsman: You woikin'?

Second Sportsman: Me woikin'? You woikin'?

First Sportsman: Doin' yourself any good?

Second Sportsman: Who does any good in this here swindle?

First Sportsman: You comin' out tomorrow?

Second Sportsman: How else can I get even?

The all-quiz, no-answer system is used effectively by the girls.

Here's a recent sample conversation between two subway riders who apparently hadn't seen each other in some time:

"You take the express?"

"Why should I take the express and get suffocated? The local isn't fast enough?"

"Don't you have to get in by nine?"

"Does HE get in by nine? So how will he know if I don't? Where you working now?"

"Did you forget already?"

"In the same place?"

"Is it so unusual for a girl to hold a situation for a year?"

They were still matching questions when the local's clatter drowned out the quiz bee.

Every bus rider has met the driver with a card in the Quiz Clan, whose coat of arms is a large angry-red question mark rampant on a field of smaller bilious green question marks.

This driver always has a bus whose signs are coated with a month's grime. "Does this bus go to 42nd St.?" you ask him, peering futilely at the illegible sign.

And he always says: "Whatsamatter, Mac, can't you read?"

Cops guarding a parade route usually qualify for membership in the clan. Some old lady always totters up to one of them and asks: "Is there a parade?"

The cop looks at her steadily and answers: "What do YOU think, lady?"

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. Some people never answer any questions.
2. In New York, members of the Quiz Clan always answer questions with other questions.
3. There is something wrong with people who never make an affirmative statement.
4. People in New York are cranky and difficult to get information from.

Key: Add one and three, subtract two, to determine the number of the correct answer.



## TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
40 sec.	915	2 min.	305
50 sec.	750	2 min., 15 sec.	272
1 min.	610	2 min., 30 sec.	250
1 min., 15 sec.	500	2 min., 45 sec.	222
1 min., 30 sec.	406	3 min.	203
1 min., 45 sec.	348		

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

Plot this rate on your progress graph.

By following the computation processes outlined on page 200, determine your average rate on the thirteen selections in this chapter, your gain in words per minute over your initial rate, and your percentage gain over the initial rate.

Record your statistics below and compare with the statistical chart you made on page 200.

INITIAL RATE (PAGE 13):	_____ W.P.M.
AVERAGE RATE IN THIS CHAPTER:	_____ W.P.M.
GAIN:	_____ W.P.M.
PERCENTAGE GAIN:	_____ PER CENT

### 3. Another Challenge to You

And now, as after your first training sessions in rapid comprehension, let me issue a challenge.

You have already tried, with that degree of success which your ability and training made possible, to go through a complete light novel in a few hours. (If you were fairly successful in your first try, I hope you repeated the activity with other novels; and if you were less successful than you had expected, I hope you repeated the experiment nevertheless, reasonably expecting a little more success each time.)

Let us, at this point, try a similar experiment.

Some evening very soon when you have a few hours at your disposal, pick up an issue of any magazine that you generally read—a new issue that you have not yet looked at. In the time available

to you that evening, attempt to complete the entire issue of the magazine.

You will find, I believe (especially at the present point in your training), that this challenge will not be too difficult to meet—provided, again, that you are not a hog.

Completing the entire issue of the magazine does not mean reading every word, nor every page, nor even every article and story within the covers.

Read those things in the magazine which interest you—it may be a total of a third, a half, three quarters or any fraction of the issue according to your natural interests. (In a later chapter I'll have more to say about reading interests; meanwhile, let's work within the framework of the interests you've developed.) But stay with the magazine until you've got out of it what you want, until you've reached the point where that particular issue holds nothing else for you, and you're ready to add it to your collection for the Salvation Army, or pass it on to other members of the family.

Skim where you wish—read always for rapid comprehension of the main idea in each article, for the general plot in each story.

Successful or unsuccessful, try again the following evening (or as soon thereafter as practical) with another magazine, perhaps with one you do not generally read, but would like to. And again, a third and fourth and fifth evening.

Try to make it a habit to read magazines through, in this way, in one sitting. If success attends your efforts, either immediately or eventually, you will discover that you can get twice as much magazine reading done, in the same time, and with as much satisfaction, as you used to.

You will also discover that you can manage to make more time for reading of all kinds—magazines, newspapers, novels, books of nonfiction.

## CHAPTER VIII

# How to Build a Large Reading Vocabulary

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### *Preview*

#### *You will learn:*

- Why a large vocabulary is important for comprehension.
- What per cent of efficiency your own vocabulary has attained.
- The five hundred words which professional writers most often use.
- How to become alert to new words you meet in your reading.
- The *natural* method of adding to your vocabulary as you read.
- How to effect a phenomenal improvement of your reading vocabulary in twenty days of intensive effort.

IN CHAPTER VIII, TIME WILL BE SPENT ON THE DIRECT STUDY OF A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT WORDS. YOU WILL HAVE YOUR READING VOCABULARY TESTED AND WILL LEARN WHAT STEPS ARE NECESSARY TO BRING YOUR VOCABULARY UP TO 100 PER CENT EFFICIENCY IN THE SHORTEST POSSIBLE TIME.

## *What Do You Know About Vocabulary?*

*Take this true-false test:*

→1. A limited vocabulary tends to develop bad reading habits. TRUE? FALSE?

→2. Vocabulary improvement slows down considerably after one's formal schooling is completed. TRUE? FALSE?

→3. Readers sometimes think a word means almost directly the opposite of its actual meaning. TRUE? FALSE?

→4. Vocabulary grows more quickly in the earlier years of a person's life than it does later on. TRUE? FALSE?

→5. Adding to your recognition vocabulary will materially aid in sharpening your comprehension. TRUE? FALSE?

To check your answers, reverse the book.

All the statements are true.

## 1. The Importance of Vocabulary Improvement

Although the principle has often been stressed in previous sections—and it cannot too frequently be reiterated—that a page of print should convey to a reader not words, but rather action, color, movement, scenery, sounds, ideas, thoughts, and feelings, nevertheless it is clear that the vehicle for all these things is words—individual English words or combinations of words.

This is the important point: the more familiar a reader is with the words he is reading, the less conscious he is that he is reading words, the less he realizes that it is by means of words that he is absorbing the contents of a sentence or paragraph.

A reader reacts in one of two possible ways to an unfamiliar word:

1. He ignores it.

2. He struggles with it. He surmises the meaning as much as he can from context. Maybe his surmise is correct, maybe it's almost correct, and maybe it's completely wild. Dr. Johnson O'Connor, director of the Human Engineering Laboratory, has found that there is a surprising tendency among readers who try to determine the meaning of an unfamiliar word from context to arrive at a conclusion almost directly opposite to the actual meaning of the word. To 52 per cent of college graduates measured by the Laboratory, *enervating* signified "invigorating"; yet the actual meaning of the word is "weakening"! To 14 per cent of college seniors taking Dr. O'Connor's tests, *procrastinate* meant "anticipate." One of the meanings of *anticipate* is "take up in advance," precisely the opposite of the true meaning of *procrastinate*, which is to "defer to a future time." *Penurious*, which contains an implication of living in poverty because of niggardliness, meant to 10 per cent of these seniors "wealthy"! It is thus clearly possible that a not too successful struggle with an unfamiliar word may result in the apprehension of a meaning on the part of a reader very different from the one the author intended.

Some conscientious citizens methodically keep a dictionary at

their side as they read and doggedly thumb through it for any word whose meaning they cannot immediately grasp. This is an excellent practice, one is forced to admit, in so far as vocabulary building is concerned. However, constant shifting from book or magazine to dictionary not only obviously slows reading to a snail's pace, but, more important, tends eventually to weaken comprehension because it sets up numerous interruptions to complete concentration. What's more, it takes much of the joy out of reading, because the dictionary thumber is not reading at all, but practically translating a foreign language; and this, if you remember your high-school experiences with your French or German reader, or your copy of Caesar or Cicero, is not the most delightful mental activity one can imagine.

One conclusion is inescapable: *A skillful reader must have a large recognition vocabulary.* And a corollary to this principle is equally true and equally important: *A poor recognition vocabulary makes completely skillful and efficient reading impossible.*

A good vocabulary and good reading habits always go hand in hand. From the first grade of primary school on up, the child augments his vocabulary and *as a direct result* improves his comprehension and increases his reading speed. The larger his vocabulary, the more a child enjoys reading; the more a child reads, the larger his vocabulary becomes. It is an interacting and ever-widening circle: reading builds vocabulary and vocabulary improves reading. Teachers have discovered that one of the contributing causes of slow, unskillful, or unsatisfying reading is a weak vocabulary; that one of the prime causes of regressions and of multiple fixations on single words is a weak vocabulary.

Your own vocabulary naturally and systematically grew all during your years of formal schooling. But what if you had very little formal schooling? Does that mean that your vocabulary is likely to be poor? Yes—unless you are an exceptional person—the likelihood is very great. What if your formal schooling stopped a long time ago? Does that mean that your vocabulary has probably not grown much since? Again, yes—for the average person that is usually what it means.

Then what should that person do whose schooling is considerably in the past and who feels that his vocabulary is not as rich as he would like it to be? There are two things for him to do—two interdependent things:

1. Increase his vocabulary directly by the actual study of words.

2. Increase his vocabulary indirectly by an informal continuation of his schooling, by stimulating his intellectual curiosity, by exploring new branches of knowledge, by doing more and more and more reading in widely diversified fields.

This chapter will be devoted to the first activity—a direct increase of vocabulary by the actual study of words. Of course, in a short period, only a start can be made. But, as you have no doubt discovered from previous experience, the start is the most important part of most human activities. Once started, an activity often rolls along of its own momentum. In a short period of concentrated vocabulary building, such a strong foundation can be laid, such an acute interest awakened, such good habits established, that you can—and these figures are offered literally, not merely for the effect—easily build your reading vocabulary up to 100 per cent effectiveness within a comparatively short time after you have finished this book.

Chapter IX will be devoted to stimulating your interest in several important fields of human knowledge and to awakening your intellectual curiosity in all previously unexplored fields. Again, within a short period, only an introduction can be aimed at. But once again, as in vocabulary building, the start will be enough to carry you on of your own momentum.

First, let us measure your vocabulary. Let us discover, by scientific testing, what percentage of a sufficiently strong reading vocabulary you already possess. To arrive at an accurate estimate, follow the directions carefully.<sup>1</sup>

### *A Test of Vocabulary Range*

There are five parts to the test, and each part contains words which are considerably more difficult than the words of all previous parts. All the words of any one part, however, are of about the same range of difficulty; and if you can correctly identify the meanings of at least eight words in a particular part, you will receive full credit for that part—20 per cent. On the other hand, if you are able to identify fewer than eight words in any given section, you receive no credit at all for that section. Thus, your score

<sup>1</sup> This test originally appeared as part of an article in *Your Life*; reprinted by permission.

will be in some multiple of 20: 20, 40, 60, 80, or 100 per cent. You may make an intelligent guess whenever you feel that you are familiar enough with a word to have an even chance of arriving at the correct answer. *Do not guess wildly.* If you have never in your life seen a particular word, or if you haven't the foggiest notion of its meaning, do not attempt an answer, as baseless guessing will invalidate your score. Answers to the test and an interpretation of your score will be found at the end of the test.

## PART I

*Directions:* Next to each of the key words in column A, copy the letter of the correct definition to be found in column B.

A	B
1. to recline	a. to chew
2. to hazard	b. to be sorry
3. to munch	c. to make fun of
4. to utilize	d. to shift one's course
5. to saturate	e. to take a chance
6. to lament	f. to erase
7. to distort	g. to put out of focus
8. to mock	h. to soak completely
9. to veer	i. to use
10. to eradicate	j. to lie down

## PART II

*Directions:* Write to the left of each number the letter of the meaning which most clearly defines each word.

1. egoism: *a*—self interest, *b*—knowledge, *c*—optimism
2. concoction: *a*—refusal, *b*—mixture, *c*—prayer
3. pollution: *a*—doing away with, *b*—corruption, *c*—coloring
4. candor: *a*—frankness, *b*—sweetness, *c*—inability
5. arrogance: *a*—refusal, *b*—fear, *c*—pride
6. extricate: *a*—complicate, *b*—release, *c*—imprison
7. agile: *a*—happy, *b*—talkative, *c*—spry
8. coherent: *a*—powerful, *b*—well-connected, *c*—rambling
9. mediocre: *a*—ordinary, *b*—poor, *c*—necessary
10. abstain: *a*—ask, *b*—splotch, *c*—refrain



### PART III

*Directions:* Check the correct answer to each question.

1. Does a *phlegmatic* person become easily excited? YES NO
2. Do excessive eaters lead an *abstemious* life? YES NO
3. Do *complacency* and anxiety usually go together? YES NO
4. Is a *diffident* person self-assertive? YES NO
5. Does *inadvertently* mean the same as purposely? YES NO
6. Is a *voluble* person generally silent? YES NO
7. Is a *panacea* a cure-all? YES NO
8. Is a *consummate* liar a skillful liar? YES NO
9. Does a *martinet* insist on strict obedience and discipline?  
YES NO
10. Does a *misogynist* enjoy the company of women? YES NO

### PART IV

*Directions:* If word and definition are nearly the same in meaning, check S; if they are more nearly opposite in meaning, check O.

- |                 |                 |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 1. veracious    | S—O truthful    |
| 2. parsimonious | S—O generous    |
| 3. stolid       | S—O sluggish    |
| 4. contrite     | S—O sorry       |
| 5. vitriolic    | S—O mild        |
| 6. pathological | S—O diseased    |
| 7. disparage    | S—O praise      |
| 8. asceticism   | S—O self-denial |
| 9. obfuscate    | S—O clarify     |
| 10. equivocal   | S—O clear       |

### PART V

*Directions:* If the statement is generally true, check T; if it is generally false, check F.

1. Industrial *peonage* is an important aspect of American life. T F
2. Medicine has *therapeutic* value. T F
3. The automobile is an *anachronism* in America. T F
4. Crooked business houses try to *mulct* the public. T F

5. *Summary* justice is dealt out to military offenders. T F
6. A *ukase* is commonly disobeyed. T F
7. A *plethora* of money forces people to live in poverty. T F
8. A *paean* is a song of lamentation. T F
9. Delight in *panoply* indicates a love of simple things. T F
10. A *truculent* person is fierce and quarrelsome. T F

*Answers:* For any part in which you have eight or more correct answers, 20 per cent credit is allowed; no credit is allowed for any part in which there are fewer than eight correct answers.

Part I: 1—j, 2—e, 3—a, 4—i, 5—h, 6—b, 7—g, 8—c, 9—d, 10—f.

Part II: 1—a, 2—b, 3—b, 4—a, 5—c, 6—b, 7—c, 8—b, 9—a, 10—c.

Part III: 1—6: all NO; 7—9: all YES; 10—NO.

Part IV: 1—S, 2—O, 3—S, 4—S, 5—O, 6—S, 7—O, 8—S, 9—O, 10—O.

Part V: 1—F, 2—T, 3—F, 4—T, 5—T, 6—F, 7—F, 8—F, 9—F, 10—T.

*What your score means:*

100 per cent: Your vocabulary range is phenomenal, superior to that of the average college graduate. You know enough words for highly abstract thinking and for a thorough understanding of the more difficult kinds of general reading matter: the heavier nonfiction books, magazines like *Harper's* and the *Atlantic Monthly*, and the editorial pages of newspapers like the *New York Times*.

80 per cent: Your vocabulary range is excellent, equal to that of the average college senior, but somewhat weak in the abtruse terms necessary for very profound thinking and extremely difficult reading.

60 per cent: Your vocabulary range is good, equal to that of the average college sophomore, but there is a broad segment of important English words with which you are totally unfamiliar; and this unfamiliarity could conceivably hamper you in your thinking, reading, and general understanding.

40 per cent: Your vocabulary range is mediocre, equal only to that of a high-school junior. For successful comprehension, your

reading matter must be restricted to confession and pulp magazines, newspapers which purposely simplify their language to keep it within your understanding, only the lighter types of fiction, and comic strips. On such a restricted diet, you are losing out on that important kind of reading matter which most broadens and educates a person.

20 per cent: Your vocabulary range is poor, equal only to that of the average eighth-grader.

The importance that this particular chapter of the book has for you is in *inverse* proportion to the score you made on the vocabulary test—the lower your score, the greater the importance. If your grade was as low as 20 to 60 per cent, pay especial attention to the next five sections, giving them as much time as you can possibly afford. The fewer the number of parts in the test that you were able to pass successfully, the more difficult your work in this chapter may seem; on the other hand, the greater its value will be to you.

If your score was high (80 to 100 per cent) you will probably be able to breeze through these sections with great rapidity, for you have a rich background; adding to your vocabulary has never been a hard chore. But do not, for that reason, neglect any of the material in these pages. As anyone with a rich vocabulary will agree, every interesting word that can be added to one's personal treasury is grist to the mill. Of more immediate interest is the fact that no matter how large your vocabulary may be, every word you add to it will help, in some small way, to make your reading more efficient and more satisfying.

And keep a pencil handy. The success of your learning will constantly be tested, and the more actively you participate in these tests the more surely will the new words become permanent and valuable aids to your reading skill.

## 2. The Words That Authors Most Frequently Use

One fortunate circumstance tends to make our goal of building a large reading vocabulary a comparatively easy one to reach in a short period of time. That circumstance is: 500 English words, out of the 600,000 that make up our language, can for several

reasons receive top priority rating in so far as their usefulness for comprehension is concerned. These are the reasons:

1. These particular 500 words are not generally found in the poor vocabulary.

2. But, more than any other uncommon words, they seem to enjoy a great vogue among writers of magazine articles, newspaper editorials, serious nonfiction, book reviews, and the like.

3. They are general, nontechnical words, hence are not restricted to any one class of writers or to writers on any one subject.

4. What especially makes these words so popular with writers is that they have deep and complex meanings; there are usually no other words which can adequately substitute for them to convey the same full meaning to a reader. It is for precisely the same reason that an adequate understanding of this minimum list is so critically important to the reader who wishes to develop his comprehension skill. Without a complete mastery of at least these words, a reader will frequently meet blind spots—that is, words which are keys to the author's thought but which, because of the reader's unfamiliarity with them, convey little or no thought to him.

This list of words was collected during a period of about a year from the following sources:

1. The editorial pages, book reviews, and columnists of three representative New York newspapers: the *Times*, the *Herald Tribune*, and the *Post*.

2. Eleven widely read magazines: *Harper's*, the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Life*, *Fortune*, the *Reader's Digest*, the *Saturday Evening Post*, the *New Yorker*, the *Ladies' Home Journal*, *American Mercury*, *Esquire*, and *Coronet*.

3. Eight popular nonfiction books.

4. Five popular novels.

The problem was to discover whether professional writers use any large group of uncommon words with enough frequency and regularity to permit the construction of a definite and not too cumbersome list which could most quickly, surely, and successfully aid a serious student in building an effective reading vocabulary.

And so I kept an alphabetical list of all the uncommon words I encountered during my investigation of the sources indicated,

and each successive time the word appeared in any source, I made a notation next to it so that a total of frequency could later be calculated.

At the end of the investigation I found that there were 1,743 uncommon words which I had encountered five or more times in the various sources. In order to narrow the list still further, I rearranged the words in order of their frequency and chose the 500 which had appeared most often. How frequently these top 500 appeared can be judged from the following table:

109 words appeared	35 to 51 times
158 words appeared	25 to 34 times
214 words appeared	20 to 24 times
16 words appeared	15 to 19 times
3 words appeared	14 times

Since these 500 words are the ones which I most frequently encountered over a twelve-month period in a representative cross section of American reading matter, it is safe to assume that they will make an excellent starting point in a plan of vocabulary improvement. Approximately 100 of the list (together with a number of related words which, though interesting and valuable additions to a reading vocabulary, did not occur frequently enough to merit inclusion among the first 500) will be discussed in the pages to follow. Then the complete list, in alphabetical order, will be presented and suggestions made for a systematic and rapid mastery of the 500 words.

We start our discussion with twenty words chosen at random from the list.

- |                 |                  |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. anomaly      | 11. ukase        |
| 2. incompatible | 12. captious     |
| 3. encomium     | 13. misanthropy  |
| 4. panegyric    | 14. philanthropy |
| 5. eulogy       | 15. anthropology |
| 6. jubilant     | 16. anthropoid   |
| 7. sporadic     | 17. misogyny     |
| 8. vicarious    | 18. gynecology   |
| 9. gregarious   | 19. obstetrician |
| 10. egregious   | 20. pediatrician |

John Chamberlain, literary critic of the *New York Times*, called *A Preface to Peace*, by Harold Callender, "an *anomaly* among books of its type in that it seeks to base its hopes for the future on the fair and accurate reporting of present facts." Apparently, out of his wide experience with such books, Mr. Chamberlain finds this one distinctly different, contrary to what might be expected, unusual in that it deviates from the general rule for such books.

An editorial in the *New York Herald Tribune* claimed that the international situation of February, 1944, proved that the Falangist State, meaning Spain, was *incompatible* with the United Nations. In other words, the two simply could not get along.

The *Tribune* editorial pointed out, in addition, that Franco of Spain heaped *encomiums* on Hitler when the German armies seemed to be within sight of victory. An *encomium* is a formal, generally public, expression of warm praise; usually the plural form, *encomiums*, is used. Synonyms of this word which are worth knowing are *panegyric* and *eulogy*; these may be used in the singular.

In February, 1944, Admiral Fletcher's Task Force bombarded Paramushiru, part of the Japanese homeland. This was no *sporadic* raid, said *The New York Times*, but rather a part of a systematic pattern. It would seem, then, that *sporadic* and *systematic* are contrasted words, for anything *sporadic* occurs only occasionally and in no particular pattern.

If you cannot experience certain things in life directly, you will have to be content with experiencing them *vicariously*. One can travel *vicariously*, by reading books about foreign lands. Romantic movies provide a *vicarious* thrill for people whose lives are barren of love and adventure. Any feeling is *vicarious* which springs, not from a direct and personal participation in some act or experience, but from reading or hearing about it, or in some way being an inactive spectator.

Human beings are by nature *gregarious*. They enjoy the company of others, they like to be part of the crowd, and prefer friend-

ship and social intercourse to solitude. The important syllable of this word, *greg*, comes from a Latin root meaning flock of sheep. *Gregarious* people like to flock together, the way sheep do. A *congregation* is a group of people who have flocked together to listen to their religious shepherd, or pastor. Anything or anyone taken out of the flock is *segregated*. And finally a most useful word: *egregious*. Anything is *egregious* which is so bad that it stands out (*ex*) from the flock (*greg*) of bad things, like an *egregious* error, an *egregious* crime, or an *egregious* insult.

Strikes are not prevented by *ukases*, editorializes the *New York Post*, but by eliminating the causes of labor troubles. A *ukase* is any official decree having the force of law.

The *Saturday Evening Post* opines that conflict is an important element of education, and that those boys and girls who want education badly enough to make great sacrifices to get it will derive the most benefit from it. This point is raised in no *captious* spirit, writes the editor, who had just attended a conference on education and didn't quite like what he heard. A person is *captious* who easily finds fault, especially over trifles.

Hitler was sometimes called a *misanthrope* because his actions often seemed indicative of a deep and unwavering hatred for mankind. *Misanthropy*, a hatred for the human race, is opposed to the more common term, *philanthropy*, a love for, and charitable acts toward, humanity. If you know the root *anthrop*, mankind, you will be able to recognize two other words: *anthropology*, the study of the development of the human race; and *anthropoid*, manlike, as in the phrase, *anthropoid apes*.

Schopenhauer, who called women the "long-haired, short-brained sex," was one of the most famous pessimists and *misogynists* among philosophers. A *misanthrope* hates all mankind; more discriminating in his aversions, a *misogynist* hates women only. The name for the philosophy is *misogyny*. The root *gyn*, meaning woman, is also found in *gynecology*, the study of women's diseases. A *gynecologist* is a doctor who specializes in the treatment of female disorders, and should not be confused with the *obstetrician*, who delivers babies, nor with the *pediatrician*, the doctor who cares for infants after they are born.

No attempt is being made in these pages to delve very deeply into the meanings of the words we are discussing. That is more properly the province of a dictionary or a vocabulary-building manual, examples of both of which will later be recommended to the serious student. However, enough of an indication of the meaning and emotional flavor of the words will be given so that you can understand what an author is trying to say when he uses them. And every time you meet these words, in varying contexts, in your everyday reading, you will become a little more keenly aware of their hidden overtones, of their significant implications, of their subtle emotional shadings.

Right now, our interest is in testing the success of your learning. If these twenty words have made a lasting impression on your mind, you should now be able, without error, to mark each of the following statements as either true or false. Only a perfect score—all twenty correct—indicates an adequate mastery of the words. If your score is low, make a further study of the words by means of your dictionary, or go over them more carefully in the explanations that preceded the test.

### *Test of Your Learning*

1. Anomalies are, by their very nature, rare. TRUE? FALSE?
2. Incompatibility makes for a happy married life. TRUE? FALSE?
3. Newspapers heap encomiums on our military heroes. TRUE? FALSE?
4. A panegyric is insulting. TRUE? FALSE?
5. It is customary to eulogize the deceased in the funeral oration. TRUE? FALSE?
6. News of a victory makes us jubilant. TRUE? FALSE?
7. Early in World War II we made sporadic air raids on Europe. TRUE? FALSE?
8. Vicarious pleasure is always keener than direct pleasure. TRUE? FALSE?
9. Hermits are gregarious. TRUE? FALSE?
10. Some nations have made egregious attacks on an unprepared country. TRUE? FALSE?
11. The Nazis ruled by ukase. TRUE? FALSE?
12. Captiousness often creates resentment. TRUE? FALSE?
13. Misanthropy is a widely held philosophy. TRUE? FALSE?
14. Kind people are usually philanthropic. TRUE? FALSE?



- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 15. Anthropology is the study of insects. | TRUE? FALSE? |
| 16. Fish are anthropoid.                  | TRUE? FALSE? |
| 17. Casanova was a misogynist.            | TRUE? FALSE? |
| 18. A gynecologist is a woman-hater.      | TRUE? FALSE? |
| 19. An obstetrician treats young infants. | TRUE? FALSE? |
| 20. A pediatrician is a foot doctor.      | TRUE? FALSE? |

*Answers:* 1—T, 2—F, 3—T, 4—F, 5—T, 6—T, 7—F, 8—F,  
9—F, 10—T, 11—T, 12—T, 13—F, 14—T, 15—F, 16—F, 17—F,  
18—F, 19—F, 20—F.

### 3. Why Building a Reading Vocabulary Is Easy

There is a certain phenomenon that helps to make vocabulary building both easy and exciting. That phenomenon might best be phrased this way: A reader might encounter a word—the same word—a dozen times in a month and be completely blind to it, not even aware of its existence. Then something external opens his eyes. Perhaps he hears some friends discussing the meaning, derivation, or spelling of the word. Perhaps he reads an explanation of it in some such book as this. One of a number of possible things might happen to wake him up. In any case, a “dead” word suddenly comes “alive” for a reader; a meaningless combination of syllables becomes pregnantly meaningful.

Then what happens? Everywhere the reader turns, he sees the word. Every book, magazine, or newspaper writer seems tenaciously bent on using just that word in a hundred varying contexts.

To explain this phenomenon, let me draw an analogy. You spend \$50 for a new overcoat—more, let us say for the sake of argument, than you have ever spent before for a coat. Or, if you are a woman, you buy a new and expensive fur coat. Then what happens? Your eyes are opened to coats. Where once before you saw men and women walking down a street, you now see overcoats and fur coats, each with a comparatively unimportant man or woman inside it. You notice color, shape, material; you notice which ones are new, and which ones look shabby. In a word, you are, for as long as your own coat retains its novelty, “coat-conscious.”

And that's the way it is with a new word. So long as a new

word, say *vicarious*, retains its novelty for you, you are "vicarious-conscious." Every time you meet it, it brings you a warm thrill of recognition. Its meaning becomes clearer and clearer at each new encounter, its emotional color more and more interesting. *Vicarious* is alive for you.

You have probably observed this phenomenon over and over in your personal experience.

So as you continue your direct study of words, let the new words sink in as deeply as you can possibly force them. Become hyperconscious of the new words you learn—and then notice how those very words begin to pop up over and over again in your everyday reading.

For the sake of convenience, the words in this section are mainly illustrated by quotations from a single book, *Cartoon Cavalcade*.<sup>2</sup> In the scintillating introductions which he has written for various parts of the book, Mr. Craven uses a mature vocabulary with such consummate skill that each paragraph, each sentence, is a joy to read—that is, it is a joy exactly in proportion to the full depth of meaning and emotional flavor that the reader's background permits him to get out of Mr. Craven's words.

Most of these twenty-nine words are high on the list of words frequently used by modern authors.

to orient	ubiquitous	loquacious	prurient
omnivorous	omnibus	prolix	sepulchral
herbivorous	duplicity	tacit	aberration
carnivorous	trenchant	ribald	errant
omnipotent	mordant	libidinous	prodigal
omniscient	taciturn	lascivious	parsimonious
omnipresent	verbose	lecherous	insidious
			laconic

To many readers, the word *orient* means Japan and China and other places in the Far East—and not much else. Very frequently, however, the word is used as a verb (to *orient* oneself, to become *oriented*); and if you know its special meaning when so used, the following sentence from Mr. Craven's work carries an important message for you: "[Cartoonists] are living and liking

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Craven, editor. Simon & Schuster, Inc., New York. Excerpts reprinted with permission.

it, not trying day and night, in an ivory tower, to *orient* themselves . . .”

To *orient* oneself is to become adjusted to the conditions in which one lives.

“Our comic artists,” says Mr. Craven, “have an *omnivorous* interest in the American people, and that is the simple explanation of their popularity.” *Omnivorous* means, literally, “eating everything,” both animal and vegetable food; but when used in its extended, figurative sense, the word refers to a wide-ranging and unhampered interest, an unrestricted intellectual diet and uninhibited curiosity about all things.

Cows, horses, and other ruminant animals are said to be *herbivorous*; they eat only grains and vegetation—no meat. Lions and tigers, on the other hand, are *carnivorous*; they feed principally on other animals. Man is *omnivorous*; he eats everything.

The prefix *omni*, as found in *omnivorous*, means “all,” and helps us to understand a number of interesting and useful words: *omnipotent*, “all-powerful”; *omniscient*, “all-knowing”; *omnipresent*, “existing all over” (for which a slightly humorous synonym is *ubiquitous*); and *omnibus*, “for all”—that is, a public vehicle for all who can pay the fare, or frequently a book containing *all* the writings of a particular author.

“William Gropper, . . . for many years a fearless battler against Japanese *duplicité*, has a genuine comic spirit which is displayed *trenchantly* in his cartoons and with unchecked extravagance in his illustrations for books.” *Duplicity* puts one in mind of such similar sounding words as *duplicate*, *duplex*, *double*, etc. People who practice *duplicity* are double-faced, or two-faced; they pretend to entertain one set of feelings while actually under the influence of an entirely different set.

Anything which is *trenchant* is keen, sharp-edged, penetrating. The word is never used literally (one does not speak of a *trenchant* knife) but only figuratively: a *trenchant* wit, a *trenchant* style of writing or speaking, a *trenchant* sense of humor. *Trenchant* is not to be confused with *mordant*, which also means cutting or biting, but in a malicious, sarcastic, caustic fashion.

*Taciturn* is the word reserved by Mr. Craven for the cartoonist Reginald Marsh, whose “fun is buried within him,” and the quoted

phrase offers a slight hint to the meaning of the word. *Taciturn* describes personality; one who is *taciturn* is usually reserved and quiet, disinclined to unnecessary conversation or any but the most sparing use of words. *Taciturn* is just the opposite of *verbose* ("wordy"), *loquacious* ("talkative"), and *prolix* ("long-winded"). Calvin Coolidge was probably our most *taciturn* President. Do not confuse *taciturn* with *laconic*. A *taciturn* person talks very little because he prefers remaining quiet. A *laconic* person uses few words to express a lot of thought; his language is pithy and pregnant with meaning, and he uses no words unnecessarily, but he has nothing against talking.

Avoid confusion also between *taciturn* and *tacit*; the latter means "unspoken." Only people are *taciturn*; only ideas, thoughts, emotions, wishes, etc., are *tacit*. Thus, it is *tacitly* assumed that students are not to commit mayhem on their teachers; no rules to that effect are ever published, yet few teachers are ever physically molested.

"*Esquire* has contributed freely to American humor, exploiting *ribaldry* and sex to the printable limit . . ." *Ribald* means, primarily, "low, coarse, vulgar"; but it has a secondary, and important, connotation of humorousness, belly-laughs, and fun. Rabelais was perhaps the most *ribald* of French authors, so much so that *ribald* and *Rabelaisian* have come to be synonyms. A *ribald* jest is one that you send the children out of the room before telling (to couch the thought in ungrammatical but understandable language).

Other words suggestive of sex which one should add to one's reading vocabulary (first, because the words pop up so often in modern reading, and second, because they're interesting of themselves) are: *libidinous*, *lascivious*, *lecherous*, and *prurient*. All of them mean about the same thing: "having lustful desires."

Craven points out that "if you have a taste for *sepulchral* humor, Charles Addams is your man." Ah, what a wonderful word! Its very sound is hollow and tomblike, and puts one in mind of dark and ghostly nights in a gloomy graveyard. Actually, I do not exaggerate too much when I say that you have to see some of Addams's cartoons to appreciate fully the meaning of the word. Pick up a dozen copies of the *New Yorker* in some public library reading room and leaf through for Addams's work if you wish

to learn more about *sepulchral* than any dictionary can tell you. This paragraph from *Cartoon Cavalcade* will give you a rough idea:

If you have a taste for *sepulchral* humor, Charles Addams is your man. His characters externally are the same as you or I, but what they do is not within the bounds of wholesome convention. In lighter vein, he gives you a graveyard with a couple of political thugs copying by flashlight the names on the tombstones, a vote-getting practice common to Kansas City; or a tropical bungalow in which a young woman looks up in annoyance from her reading and admonishes her husband to "speak up and stop mumbling," the husband speaking from the inside of a python which has let itself down from the rafters. When truly happy, he sends a sinister damsel to a dark old house to borrow, please, a cup of arsenic; and when ecstatic, he shows you a father standing on a pile of books under a chandelier from which a knotted rope is dangling. The man has a farewell note pinned to his pants and is in the act of putting his head in the noose, when a well-schooled Boy Scout opens the door and shouts the caption: "Hey, Pop, that's not a hangman's knot!"

Craven describes the years following World War I: "The marvelous events and moral *aberrations* of the period will occupy historians for years to come."

The key to the italicized word is the syllable *err*. To *err* is to make a mistake, to wander from truth. (Compare the noun *error*, the adjective *erroneous*, and the phrase *knight-errant*, a knight who in the good old days wandered on his horse seeking damsels in distress who needed rescuing.) An *aberration* is any wandering away from, any deviation from, what is right, natural, or normal. We speak of the mental *aberrations* of insane people, or the moral *aberrations* of people who lead wild and wanton lives.

Craven continues: "The war was followed by the machine age which, in centralized wealth and social extravagance, made the *prodigality* of the gilded age of the nineties no more than the crude gestures of pioneers and amateurs." You doubtless recall the fatted calf which was killed when the *prodigal* son of biblical fame returned to his home and family. This allusion is probably guilty of leading many readers into the error of thinking that *prodigal* means "*wandering*." It doesn't. Anyone who is *prodigal* is extravagant, wasteful, profligate. *Prodigal* people spend money

foolishly and extravagantly; they waste their substance, often in riotous living—which, incidentally, is a very pleasant, if not wise, thing to do. One can also be *prodigal* of one's opportunities or good fortune—that is, not take advantage of them or it. Nature is *prodigal* of human life, as earthquakes, tornadoes, floods, or glacial disturbances prove. The direct opposite of *prodigal* is *parsimonious*.

A final quotation from Craven will close this section: "The Babbits ran the country. Possessing wealth and power, they controlled the votes and represented the majority—but their way of life was not unchallenged. *Insidious* forces were organizing, and when the revolt came, it was a pitched battle of prolonged fierceness and intensity, the most slaughterous campaign against materialistic culture ever waged in America." What are "*insidious* forces," a phrase continually cropping up in modern literature? A reference to the Latin word from which the English term springs will immediately make the meaning clear. In Latin, *insidia* was an ambush, a military trap. Hence, *insidious* forces are ensnaring, wily, treacherous, deceiving forces. Anything *insidious* seems, superficially, perfectly innocent (the success of a military ambush is predicated on this quality), but is in reality harmful, pernicious, deadly.

Study the words and explanations in this section carefully; feel that you have gained an observable mastery over the new terms before taking the test which follows. And, as before, consider that success is indicated by nothing less than a perfect score.

### *Test of Your Learning*

If two words are similar in meaning, write S between them. If they are considerably different (they need not be opposites), write D.

1. orient ..... get used to
2. omnivorous ..... greedy
3. herbivorous ..... meat-eating
4. carnivorous ..... fierce
5. omnipotent ..... weak
6. omniscient ..... wise

7. omnipresent	found-all-over
8. ubiquitous	found-all-over
9. omnibus	public vehicle
10. duplicity	double-dealing
11. trenchant	untrustworthy
12. mordant	dying
13. taciturn	talkative
14. verbose	silent
15. loquacious	voluble
16. prolix	wordy
17. tacit	unspoken
18. ribald	coarse
19. libidinous	lustful
20. lascivious	ascetic
21. lecherous	pure
22. prurient	foolish
23. sepulchral	merry
24. aberration	deviation
25. errant	wandering
26. prodigal	profligate
27. parsimonious	stingy
28. insidious	wily
29. laconic	garrulous

Answers: 1—S, 2 to 5—D, 6 to 10—S, 11 to 14—D, 15 to 19—S, 20 to 23—D, 24 to 28—S, 29—D.

#### 4. Adding Words Without a Dictionary

Suppose, for instance, that you have a vocabulary of 50,000 words. How many of those words did you learn by looking them up in a dictionary? Probably not more than a hundred—if that many.

That fact proves a point: the *natural* way to build a vocabulary is not by studying the dictionary.

But that puts it negatively. To phrase it positively: the natural way to build a vocabulary is by the gradual growth of one's mental stature—by the constant whetting and satisfaction of one's intellectual curiosity.

Let's go back:

It is safe to say that, unless you are an exception to the rule, your greatest period of vocabulary growth was during the first twenty years of your life—granting that you are now over twenty.

Why then?

First, because that was the period of your formal schooling. Second, because that was the period in which the world held its greatest and freshest novelty for you—you wanted to learn, because learning is natural to childhood, youth, and adolescence. And words are the symbols of learning, the means by which curiosity is satisfied. Third, because you have read more books (again, unless you are an exception to the general rule) in your first twenty years than you will read all the rest of your life unless you consciously plan otherwise.

A large vocabulary results from wide learning and varied reading.

This much is definitely known: for most people vocabulary grows at a phenomenal rate for the first twenty years. After that, by comparison with the former rate of growth, it slows down so radically that for practical purposes one might almost say that it comes to a dead stop.

The reason is this: after twenty, the average person grows greatly in experience, but comparatively little in *pure knowledge*.

How, then, can you accelerate your vocabulary growth once you've passed your twentieth birthday?

Partly by means of books such as this one, or by means of vocabulary building manuals, examples of which will be suggested later. Mostly, by doubling, tripling, quadrupling the amount of reading you do; through changing your reading habits to include the better magazines, the more adult newspapers, a greater range of nonfiction books in a wider variety of fields (the latter will be thoroughly discussed in chapter IX).

*And through being on the alert for new words while reading.*

Exactly how do you go about it?

The *seemingly* logical method to suggest is that you read with a dictionary at your side. There are, however, two objections to this method, both of which have been mentioned before:

1. You won't do it. Human beings are human beings, and it is pointless to ask them to do anything that is not within the realm of human likelihood.

2. Even if you would do it, not only comprehension, but also concentration would be too radically inhibited. You would im-



prove your vocabulary, without a doubt, but in the process you would lose too much of one of the greatest benefits of reading, namely *enjoyment*.

So that throws out the seemingly logical method. And leaves us searching for a method that is more practical.

A completely practical method is this:

1. Let any new word you encounter in your reading register, for a second or so, in your mind.

2. Spend a few more seconds puzzling its probable meaning from the context in which you find it.

That's all.

Just two steps.

Then go right on with your reading. Until, of course, you come across another new word.

The rest happens without any extra *voluntary* effort on your part. Because you spent those additional seconds registering a new word in your mind, and puzzling about it, the next time you meet it it will hit you a little more strongly than it did the first time.

And you will meet it again—because you are now conscious of its existence, and are, without realizing it, on the alert for its next appearance.

Each time you meet it in a different context, with a new emotional color given to it by a different author, its meaning will become a little clearer to you. Or, if you misunderstood its meaning the first time, the second appearance will begin to set you straight. And the third and fourth and subsequent appearances will add more and more to its meaning.

Eventually, it will be an old friend.

Then subsequent encounters will not detract from your reading speed, but will, on the other hand, add to the completeness of your comprehension.

Remember: until you become alert to new words, your mind will skip over them, will be unaware of their existence, no matter how often you may meet them.

It all ties in with the phenomenon described in the introduction to section 3.

And now, to repeat another important principle: you learn by doing, by active participation.

So practice adding to your reading vocabulary by:

## Becoming Alert to New Words

Imagine that you found the words below in the following sentences. How well could you puzzle out the meanings of those you haven't seen before? Check what you consider the correct definition for each word, compare with the answers given at the end of the exercise, then continue with the explanations of these and related words.

- |               |                |
|---------------|----------------|
| 1. malinger   | 6. querulous   |
| 2. acumen     | 7. dipsomaniac |
| 3. enervated  | 8. implacable  |
| 4. gullible   | 9. cacophony   |
| 5. vindictive | 10. obdurate   |

1. Prison doctors have learned to detect willful *malinger*ing.  
*a*—cowardice, *b*—pretence of illness, *c*—evasion of duty
2. Business executives are usually men of *acumen*.  
*a*—political power, *b*—wealth, *c*—mental quickness
3. His all-night vigil *enervated* him.  
*a*—exhausted, *b*—caused loss of sleep, *c*—contributed financial aid
4. *Gullible* housewives fall easy prey to unscrupulous salesmen.  
*a*—stupid, *b*—easily fooled, *c*—overanxious
5. On hearing of enemy atrocities, one cannot help feeling *vin-*  
*dictive*.  
*a*—terrified, *b*—eager for revenge, *c*—depressed
6. *Querulous* wives wear their husbands' patience thin.  
*a*—complaining, *b*—frowsy-looking, *c*—selfish
7. To a *dipsomaniac*, "Schenley's" is a beautiful word.  
*a*—advertisement writer, *b*—tavern owner, *c*—person mor-  
bidly addicted to liquor
8. The hope of democracy lies in the *implacable* foes of fascism.  
*a*—unyielding, *b*—honest, *c*—converted
9. To rustic visitors, the *cacophony* of a big city is often ter-  
rifying.  
*a*—rush, *b*—harsh noise, *c*—coldness
10. The condemned man's wife begged for a pardon, or at least  
a commutation of sentence; but the Governor was *obdurate*.  
*a*—unyielding, *b*—unimpressed, *c*—unfavorable

Answers: 1—*b*, 2—*c*, 3—*a*, 4—*b*, 5—*b*, 6—*a*, 7—*c*, 8—*a*, 9—*b*,  
10—*a*.

## Related Words

- |                  |                |
|------------------|----------------|
| 11. malignant    | 19. pyromaniac |
| 12. malevolent   | 20. complacent |
| 13. to malign    | 21. to placate |
| 14. malediction  | 22. euphony    |
| 15. malaise      | 23. eulogy     |
| 16. perspicacity | 24. eugenics   |
| 17. perspicuity  | 25. adamant    |
| 18. plaintive    | 26. inexorable |

### Explanations of the 26 words:

To *maling* is to pretend illness, or some physical inability, for the purpose of shirking one's duty. A practitioner of the art is a *malingerer*. The word is indirectly derived from the Latin adverb *male*, badly, an etymological root which is also responsible for the English words *malignant*, "harmful"; *malevolent*, "wishing harm"; to *malign*, a verb meaning "to spread slander about someone"; *malediction*, "a curse"; and *malaise*, "a vague feeling of physical discomfort."

*Acumen*, which is mental keenness, comes from the same root as *acute*, which means "sharp." *Acumen* and *perspicacity* are close synonyms. *Perspicacity* should not be confused with *perspicuity*, which is the quality of being clear, easy to understand. Thus, only people show *perspicacity*—that is, keen mental ability, sharp discernment; but people or things, if their meaning is readily grasped, possess *perspicuity*. When you call a writer *perspicacious*, you admire the keenness of his intellect; when you call him *perspicuous*, you are paying a compliment to his lucid style.

*Querulous* and *plaintive* are synonymous in the sense that both have a primary meaning of complaining. But *querulous*, a disparaging adjective, indicates habitual complaint, nagging, fretfulness; while *plaintive* is a much pleasanter word with the connotations of melancholy or mournfulness. There is a distinctly different emotional flavor in the two words.

A *dipsomaniac* is morbidly addicted to the consumption of alcohol, in any form that human beings can tolerate, and in quantities impossible to describe or even imagine. He is a sot, a con-

tinual imbibor, a slave to John Barleycorn. People who suffer under the burden of a different kind of psychic disturbance—namely the inability to resist setting fires—are called *pyromaniacs*. Do not confuse these unfortunates, for whom fire has a morbid and irresistible attraction, with *incendiaries*, or, to use the legal term, *arsonists*, who set fires maliciously and exclusively through a desire for illegal gain, as for example collecting on a fire insurance policy.

Two frequently encountered synonyms of *implacable* are *adamant* and *inexorable*: all three words mean virtually the same thing, incapable of being moved or made to change one's mind or decision. *Complacent* and the verb *placate* come from the same root as *implacable*, the Latin word *placeo*, "to please." A *complacent* person is smugly pleased with himself; to *placate* is to soothe, pacify.

*Cacophony*, harsh sound, is the opposite of *euphony*, pleasant sound. The same root, *eu*, from the Greek word for *good*, is found in *eulogy*, a speech of praise, and in *eugenics*, the science of good breeding.

Although the words in this section have at best been discussed superficially, if you have followed these pages carefully and thoughtfully you should be able to make a perfect score in this

### Review Test

*Directions:* If two words are the same in meaning, check S; if they are opposite in meaning, check O.

- |                            |     |                              |     |
|----------------------------|-----|------------------------------|-----|
| 1. malinger; shirk         | S O | 12. malevolent; charitable   | S O |
| 2. acumen; stupidity       | S O | 13. malediction; curse       | S O |
| 3. enervated; tired        | S O | 14. malaise; exhilaration    | S O |
| 4. gullible; skeptical     | S O | 15. perspicuity; clearness   | S O |
| 5. vindictive; forgiving   | S O | 16. perspicacity; stupidity  | S O |
| 6. querulous; satisfied    | S O | 17. complacent; discontented | S O |
| 7. dipsomaniac; teetotaler | S O | 18. placate; pacify          | S O |
| 8. implacable; inexorable  | S O | 19. eulogy; panegyric        | S O |
| 9. cacophony; euphony      | S O | 20. pyromaniac; fire-bug     | S O |
| 10. obdurate; adamant      | S O |                              |     |
| 11. malignant; kind        | S O |                              |     |

Answers: 1—S, 2—O, 3—S, 4—O, 5—O, 6—O, 7—O, 8—S, 9—O,  
10—S, 11—O, 12—O, 13—S, 14—O, 15—S, 16—O, 17—O, 18—S,  
19—S, 20—S.

## 5. How to React to a New Word

Yes, you can build a large reading vocabulary by merely learning to make a mental register of the new words you meet. You cannot fully appreciate the ease and rapidity with which you can do this until you actually try it.

This section is an invitation to you to get started. Here are ten excerpts from an article which appeared recently in *Fortune* magazine.

*Directions:* Study each sentence carefully, with a view to arriving at an approximate meaning of the italicized word. Then check the definition you trust.

1. It is strange, now, to recall those early accounts of the fanatical Japanese suicide squadrons, which were supposed to throw themselves away for the sake of getting in one blow at an enemy too formidable to be taken by *orthodox* methods.

*a*—conforming to tradition or prescribed rules, *b*—weak, *c*—improvised

2. Japan lost; her retreating forces were *decimated*.

*a*—demoralized, *b*—harried, *c*—almost completely destroyed

3. (Japan's) bewilderment—by no means a *histrionic* gesture calculated to confuse her enemies—was in good faith.

*a*—futile, *b*—theatrical, *c*—long-planned

4. Japan was *sanguine* as to her destiny.

*a*—cheerfully optimistic, *b*—pessimistic, *c*—indifferent

5. Failure in these offensives, heaped on top of failure in the China war itself, may have produced the brawling and *caviling* characteristics of Japanese politics during the period.

*a*—bewildered, *b*—frivolously fault-finding, *c*—constantly contradictory

6. Western journalists . . . accepted . . . military announcements as *fiat*.

*a*—official decree, *b*—truth, *c*—propaganda that has little basis in fact

7. The Japanese military . . . *eschewed* statistics, believed their agents instead of the newspapers.

*a*—gathered, *b*—carefully analyzed, *c*—avoided

8. To judge the value of *attrition* warfare . . .

*a*—slow wearing-down of resistance, *b*—principle of surprise attack, *c*—completely mechanized

9. Attack on Pearl Harbor . . . spread a confusion as deadly as high explosive and *precluded* immediate United States naval action.

*a*—made necessary, *b*—made impossible, *c*—made to seem wise

10. Even our hindsight was *belated*; it took time for us to take the Japanese seriously.

*a*—confused, *b*—self-deluding, *c*—unnecessarily delayed

*Answers:* Here are the answers; check your results, then study the words carefully and prepare for a quick matching test on which your goal is 100 per cent accuracy.

1—*a*, 2—*c*, 3—*b*, 4—*a*, 5—*b*, 6—*a*, 7—*c*, 8—*a*, 9—*b*, 10—*c*.

### Matching Test

- |               |                                |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. orthodox   | <i>a.</i> delayed              |
| 2. decimated  | <i>b.</i> complaining          |
| 3. histrionic | <i>c.</i> made impossible      |
| 4. sanguine   | <i>d.</i> hopeful              |
| 5. caviling   | <i>e.</i> dramatic             |
| 6. fiat       | <i>f.</i> official order       |
| 7. eschewed   | <i>g.</i> gradual wearing-down |
| 8. attrition  | <i>h.</i> destroyed            |
| 9. precluded  | <i>i.</i> kept away from       |
| 10. belated   | <i>j.</i> traditional          |

*Answers:* 1—*j*, 2—*h*, 3—*e*, 4—*d*, 5—*b*, 6—*f*, 7—*i*, 8—*g*, 9—*c*, 10—*a*.

Now do not commit the error of believing that your single contact with these words is supposed to give you complete mastery over them. Far from it. The important thing is that you have made contact. If you have never seen, or at least have never consciously noticed, some of these words before, your present

understanding of them must perforce be somewhat meager. But that doesn't matter. *You have made conscious contact*, and as you meet these words over and over, their full meanings and emotional color will gradually unfold.

## 6. The Five Hundred Most Important Words for Your Reading Vocabulary

Here, finally, is the complete list of the five hundred uncommon words which I encountered most frequently in a year's search among books, magazines, and newspapers.

The list is arranged alphabetically and divided into 20 sections. These suggestions are made for your mastery of the list:

1. Do one section each day.
2. As a first step, read through the 25 words for the day, checking those which are new to you or with which you do not feel sufficiently familiar.
3. Using a good dictionary,<sup>3</sup> look up and learn those words which you have checked.
4. Depending on your habits of learning, either keep a written record of each new word and its meaning, or rely on your memory if you're sure that your memory is reliable.
5. When you feel that you've mastered the new word in each section, turn to the review tests beginning on page 407, and take the test for the section you have just completed. Aim always for a perfect score; if you fall short of 100 per cent, consider your failure an indication that more studying is necessary.
6. The review tests serve two purposes: (a) as a check on your learning; (b) as a means of so actively involving you with these words that you will be sure to recognize and understand them when you see them in your reading.
7. While I believe that this list contains the uncommon words which bob up most frequently in general reading, you are not

<sup>3</sup> The two best, in my opinion, are *The American College Dictionary* (Random House, New York, \$6.00), and *The New Collegiate Dictionary* (G. & C. Merriam Co., Springfield, Mass., \$6.00). These are desk size and well worth the price. However, if you wish a less expensive dictionary, I can heartily recommend *Words: The New Dictionary* (Grosset and Dunlap, New York, \$2.00), *The Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary* (Pocketbooks, New York, 25 cents), and *The New American Webster Dictionary* (New American Library of World Literature, Inc., New York, 25 cents).

to consider that mastery of the list will give you a complete reading vocabulary. There are plenty of other words—equally valuable, equally interesting—which you will often meet in your everyday reading. So put into effect the rules suggested in section 3 of this chapter for making a mental note of new words as you meet them. From now on, and until the end of your reading days, keep building your vocabulary by being ever on the alert for new words.

8. If you prefer a faster and more direct method of building your reading vocabulary to greater efficiency, and if you are willing to be generous with your time and effort, there are several vocabulary-building manuals which you may want to add to your library.

*Recommended vocabulary-building manuals:*

1. *English Vocabulary Builder*, by Johnson O'Connor.
2. *Twelve Ways to Build a Vocabulary*, by Archibald Hart, Ph.D.
3. *Word Wealth*, by Ward S. Miller.
4. *Thirty Days to a More Powerful Vocabulary*, by Wilfred Funk and Norman Lewis.
5. *Power with Words*, by Norman Lewis.
6. *How to Build a Better Vocabulary*, by Maxwell Nurnberg and W. T. Rhodes.
7. *The New Way to Vocabulary Power and Culture*, by Wilfred Funk.
8. *Word Origins and Their Romantic Histories*, by Wilfred Funk.
9. *How to Double Your Vocabulary*, by S. Stephenson Smith.
10. *The Command of Words*, by S. Stephenson Smith.
11. *Word Power Made Easy—The Complete Three-Week Vocabulary Builder*, by Norman Lewis.

*Section I*

- |               |                 |               |
|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. aberration | 7. acerbity     | 13. adroit    |
| 2. abject     | 8. acme         | 14. adulation |
| 3. abominable | 9. acrid        | 15. affluence |
| 4. abortive   | 10. acrimonious | 16. agnostic  |
| 5. abstemious | 11. acumen      | 17. alacrity  |
| 6. abstruse   | 12. adamant     | 18. alleviate |



- |                  |                |               |
|------------------|----------------|---------------|
| 19. altruism     | 21. ambiguous  | 23. amenable  |
| 20. ambidextrous | 22. ameliorate | 24. amenities |
|                  |                | 25. amorphous |

Review tests for these sections begin on page 407.

### *Section 2*

- |                  |                 |               |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------|
| 26. anachronism  | 34. anticlimax  | 42. argot     |
| 27. analogous    | 35. antipathy   | 43. ascetic   |
| 28. anathema     | 36. antithesis  | 44. assiduous |
| 29. animosity    | 37. aphrodisiac | 45. assuage   |
| 30. anodyne      | 38. aplomb      | 46. astute    |
| 31. anomaly      | 39. apocryphal  | 47. atavistic |
| 32. anthropoid   | 40. arbitrary   | 48. atheist   |
| 33. anthropology | 41. archaic     | 49. attrition |
|                  |                 | 50. augment   |

### *Section 3*

- |                |                 |                |
|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| 51. auspicious | 59. belated     | 67. bucolic    |
| 52. austere    | 60. benediction | 68. bumptious  |
| 53. autonomous | 61. beneficent  | 69. cacophony  |
| 54. avarice    | 62. benevolent  | 70. cadaverous |
| 55. avidity    | 63. benign      | 71. cadence    |
| 56. badinage   | 64. blithe      | 72. cajole     |
| 57. baleful    | 65. bovine      | 73. calumny    |
| 58. bathos     | 66. bromide     | 74. capricious |
|                |                 | 75. captious   |

### *Section 4*

- |                     |                    |                 |
|---------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 76. carnivorous     | 85. clairvoyant    | 94. concomitant |
| 77. carte blanche   | 86. clandestine    | 95. condone     |
| 78. castigate       | 87. claustrophobia | 96. consummate  |
| 79. catholic (adj.) | 88. coerce         | (adj.)          |
| 80. cavil           | 89. cogent         | 97. contentious |
| 81. celibate        | 90. cogitate       | 98. contrite    |
| 82. chauvinism      | 91. commiserate    | 99. convivial   |
| 83. chicanery       | 92. complacency    | 100. corpulent  |
| 84. chimera         | 93. compunction    |                 |

### Section 5

- |                  |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 101. corroborate | 109. debauchery  | 117. detract     |
| 102. cryptic     | 110. decimate    | 118. dexterity   |
| 103. culinary    | 111. decorum     | 119. diffidence  |
| 104. culpable    | 112. defunct     | 120. dilettante  |
| 105. cupidity    | 113. deleterious | 121. dipsomaniac |
| 106. cursory     | 114. deprecate   | 122. dishabille  |
| 107. cynosure    | 115. depredation | 123. disparage   |
| 108. dearth      | 116. desultory   | 124. disparity   |
|                  |                  | 125. docile      |

### Section 6

- |                    |                 |                 |
|--------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 126. dogmatic      | 134. effete     | 142. enigmatic  |
| 127. dormant       | 135. egomaniac  | 143. ennui      |
| 128. dour          | 136. egregious  | 144. ephemeral  |
| 129. dubious       | 137. emasculate | 145. epitome    |
| 130. dulcet        | 138. empirical  | 146. equanimity |
| 131. duplicity     | 139. emulate    | 147. equivocal  |
| 132. ebullience    | 140. encomiums  | 148. eschew     |
| 133. effervescence | 141. enervation | 149. esoteric   |
|                    |                 | 150. esthetic   |

### Section 7

- |                 |                  |                 |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 151. ethereal   | 159. exotic      | 167. fetish     |
| 152. eugenics   | 160. expedite    | 168. fetid      |
| 153. eulogy     | 161. expiate     | 169. fiasco     |
| 154. euphemism  | 162. expostulate | 170. fiat       |
| 155. euphony    | 163. extirpate   | 171. flagrant   |
| 156. evanescent | 164. extrovert   | 172. fortuitous |
| 157. execrable  | 165. fatuous     | 173. fracas     |
| 158. exigency   | 166. fecund      | 174. fractious  |
|                 |                  | 175. frugality  |

### Section 8

- |                 |                   |                 |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 176. fulminate  | 179. futilitarian | 182. gregarious |
| 177. functional | 180. germane      | 183. gullible   |
| 178. furtive    | 181. grandiose    | 184. gynecology |

- |                    |                   |                   |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 185. halcyon       | 190. histrionic   | 195. iconoclasm   |
| 186. harbinger     | 191. holocaust    | 196. idiosyncrasy |
| 187. harass        | 192. homogeneous  | 197. ignominy     |
| 188. hauteur       | 193. hyperbole    | 198. illusory     |
| 189. heterogeneous | 194. hypochondria | 199. imbroglia    |
|                    |                   | 200. immolate     |

### *Section 9*

- |                    |                    |                 |
|--------------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 201. imperturbable | 209. inane         | 217. indigent   |
| 202. impious       | 210. incipient     | 218. indolence  |
| 203. implacable    | 211. inclement     | 219. ineffable  |
| 204. implicit      | 212. incompatible  | 220. inexorable |
| 205. impugn        | 213. incongruous   | 221. ingenuous  |
| 206. impunity      | 214. incorrigible  | 222. iniquity   |
| 207. impute        | 215. incredulous   | 223. innocuous  |
| 208. inadvertent   | 216. indefatigable | 224. insidious  |
|                    |                    | 225. insipid    |

### *Section 10*

- |                   |                  |                 |
|-------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 226. insouciant   | 234. irascible   | 242. latent     |
| 227. intractable  | 235. itinerant   | 243. lechery    |
| 228. intransigent | 236. jingoism    | 244. lethargy   |
| 229. intrepid     | 237. jubilation  | 245. levity     |
| 230. introversion | 238. kleptomania | 246. libidinous |
| 231. inundate     | 239. laconic     | 247. limbo      |
| 232. inure        | 240. lampoon     | 248. limpid     |
| 233. inviolate    | 241. lascivious  | 249. lithe      |
|                   |                  | 250. loquacious |

### *Section 11*

- |                    |                  |                           |
|--------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| 251. lugubrious    | 259. malinger    | 268. mephistophe-<br>lian |
| 252. machiavellian | 260. manic       | 269. mercurial            |
| 253. malaise       | 261. martinet    | 270. meretricious         |
| 254. malediction   | 262. maudlin     | 271. metamorphosis        |
| 255. malefactor    | 263. mayhem      | 272. metaphorical         |
| 256. malevolent    | 264. megalomania | 273. meticulous           |
| 257. malign (vb.)  | 265. melange     | 274. militate             |
| 258. malignant     | 266. mellifluous | 275. mirage               |
|                    | 267. mendacity   |                           |

### *Section 12*

- |                  |                |                   |
|------------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 276. misanthropy | 284. myriad    | 292. nuance       |
| 277. misogyny    | 285. nadir     | 293. nymphomania  |
| 278. mitigate    | 286. naive     | 294. obdurate     |
| 279. mollify     | 287. nebulous  | 295. obfuscate    |
| 280. mordant     | 288. nefarious | 296. oblique      |
| 281. moribund    | 289. nepotism  | 297. oblivion     |
| 282. mulct       | 290. nostalgia | 298. obloquy      |
| 283. mundane     | 291. novitiate | 299. obsequious   |
|                  |                | 300. obstetrician |

### *Section 13*

- |                  |                   |                    |
|------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| 301. obtuse      | 309. opulence     | 317. panacea       |
| 302. occult      | 310. orthodox     | 318. panegyric     |
| 303. ominous     | 311. orient (vb.) | 319. paragon       |
| 304. omnipotent  | 312. ostracize    | 320. paranoia      |
| 305. omnipresent | 313. paeon        | 321. paroxysm      |
| 306. omniscient  | 314. palliate     | 322. parsimonious  |
| 307. omnivorous  | 315. pallid       | 323. patent (adj.) |
| 308. opinionated | 316. palpable     | 324. pedantic      |
|                  |                   | 325. penchant      |

### *Section 14*

- |                   |                   |                 |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| 326. penurious    | 334. pediatrician | 342. plebeian   |
| 327. perfidious   | 335. peonage      | 343. plethora   |
| 328. perfunctory  | 336. philander    | 344. poignant   |
| 329. peripheral   | 337. phlegmatic   | 345. polyglot   |
| 330. persiflage   | 338. pique        | 346. pompous    |
| 331. perspicacity | 339. placate      | 347. portentous |
| 332. perspicuity  | 340. plaintive    | 348. posthumous |
| 333. pathological | 341. platitude    | 349. pragmatic  |
|                   |                   | 350. preclude   |

### *Section 15*

- |                   |                   |                  |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 351. predatory    | 355. presentiment | 359. prolific    |
| 352. predilection | 356. presumptuous | 360. prolixity   |
| 353. pre-empt     | 357. prodigal     | 361. promiscuity |
| 354. presage      | 358. prodigious   | 362. propinquity |

- |                 |                 |                    |
|-----------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| 363. propitiate | 367. psychotic  | 371. punctilious   |
| 364. prosaic    | 368. pugnacious | 372. pungent       |
| 365. prurience  | 369. puberty    | 373. pusillanimous |
| 366. pseudo     | 370. puerile    | 374. pyromania     |
|                 |                 | 375. querulous     |

### *Section 16*

- |                     |                  |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 376. quintessence   | 384. redolent    | 392. respite     |
| 377. quixotic       | 385. redundancy  | 393. retribution |
| 378. rampant        | 386. regimen     | 394. revulsion   |
| 379. rationalize    | 387. regurgitate | 395. ribald      |
| 380. raucous        | 388. relevant    | 396. risible     |
| 381. recalcitrant   | 389. renegade    | 397. risqué      |
| 382. recondite      | 390. repudiate   | 398. rotund      |
| 383. recriminations | 391. resilient   | 399. rubble      |
|                     |                  | 400. rudimentary |

### *Section 17*

- |                           |                    |                  |
|---------------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 401. ruminate             | 409. sanguinary    | 418. senile      |
| 402. rustic               | 410. sanguine      | 419. sententious |
| 403. saccharine<br>(adj.) | 411. sardonic      | 420. sepulchral  |
| 404. sacrilegious         | 412. saturnalia    | 421. shambles    |
| 405. sadism               | 413. saturnine     | 422. simulate    |
| 406. sagacity             | 414. schizophrenia | 423. sloth       |
| 407. salient (adj.)       | 415. scourge       | 424. sobriquet   |
| 408. sanctimonious        | 416. sedate        | 425. solicitous  |
|                           | 417. sedulous      |                  |

### *Section 18*

- |                |                     |                    |
|----------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| 426. sonorous  | 434. stratum        | 442. supercilious  |
| 427. sophistry | 435. strident       | 443. surfeit       |
| 428. soporific | 436. stringent      | 444. surreptitious |
| 429. specious  | 437. suave          | 445. sycophant     |
| 430. sporadic  | 438. subterfuge     | 446. synthesis     |
| 431. stilted   | 439. subversive     | 447. tacit         |
| 432. stoic     | 440. succinct       | 448. taciturn      |
| 433. stolid    | 441. summary (adj.) | 449. tantamount    |
|                |                     | 450. tedium        |

*Section 19*

- |                  |                  |                  |
|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| 451. temerity    | 459. toxic       | 467. tyro        |
| 452. temporize   | 460. translucent | 468. ubiquitous  |
| 453. tenet       | 461. travesty    | 469. ukase       |
| 454. tenuous     | 462. trenchant   | 470. unctuous    |
| 455. therapeutic | 463. trepidation | 471. unrequited  |
| 456. titanic     | 464. truculent   | 472. unwitting   |
| 457. titillation | 465. truism      | 473. upbraid     |
| 458. torpid      | 466. turgid      | 474. urbane      |
|                  |                  | 475. utilitarian |

*Section 20*

- |                |                     |                   |
|----------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| 476. vacillate | 484. verbose        | 492. visceral     |
| 477. vacuous   | 485. verisimilitude | 493. vitiate      |
| 478. vagary    | 486. vicarious      | 494. vitriolic    |
| 479. vapid     | 487. vicissitude    | 495. vituperative |
| 480. vegetate  | 488. vindictive     | 496. volatile     |
| 481. venomous  | 489. virile         | 497. voluble      |
| 482. veracity  | 490. virtuoso       | 498. vortex       |
| 483. verbatim  | 491. virulent       | 499. wanton       |
|                |                     | 500. zenith       |

## Review Test

### What Have You Learned About Vocabulary?

Take this true-false test:

1. It is very important to refer to the dictionary for the meaning of each unfamiliar word you meet in your reading.  
TRUE? FALSE?
2. A limited vocabulary tends to develop poor reading habits.  
TRUE? FALSE?
3. Building a large reading vocabulary will encourage you to tackle more mature and more difficult reading material.  
TRUE? FALSE?
4. Vocabulary improvement slows down considerably after one's formal schooling has stopped.  
TRUE? FALSE?
5. Readers sometimes think a word has a meaning almost directly the opposite of its actual meaning.  
TRUE? FALSE?
6. A reader is frequently unaware of the existence of the unfamiliar words he has met in his reading.  
TRUE? FALSE?
7. Becoming alert to new words is the most natural method of building a large vocabulary.  
TRUE? FALSE?
8. Vocabulary grows more quickly after a person has reached maturity than it did in the earlier years of his life.  
TRUE? FALSE?
9. Increased amounts of good reading will not materially increase one's recognition vocabulary.  
TRUE? FALSE?
10. Vocabulary-building manuals and other aids to the direct study of words are a waste of time in so far as the improvement of reading skill is concerned.  
TRUE? FALSE?
11. Knowing too many words can possibly decrease keenness of comprehension.  
TRUE? FALSE?
12. Sharpening of one's intellectual curiosity will inevitably increase the recognition vocabulary.  
TRUE? FALSE?

To check your answers, reverse the book.

Key: 1—F, 2—T, 3—T, 4—T, 5—T, 6—T, 7—T, 8—F, 9—F,  
10—F, 11—F, 12—T.  
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## CHAPTER IX

# How to Sharpen Your Intellectual Curiosity

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### *Preview*

#### *You will learn:*

- The secret of concentration in reading.
- Why intellectual curiosity is important for a mastery of reading.
- How sharp your own intellectual curiosity is.
- How you can accelerate your intellectual growth.
- How to read a difficult book.
- Which eight books can do the most for your reading skill.
- How to start developing a sharper intellectual curiosity.

CHAPTER IX WILL BE DEVOTED TO SHARPENING YOUR INTELLECTUAL CURIOSITY. YOU WILL TAKE THE FIRST STEPS TOWARD MASTERING THE COMPLEX ART OF CONCENTRATION. YOU WILL LEARN, ALSO, THE IMPORTANCE OF READING DIFFICULT BOOKS AND HOW MOST EFFECTIVELY TO READ THEM.



## What Do You Know About Reading?

Take this true-false test:

- 1. Any person of normal intelligence can concentrate.  
TRUE? FALSE?
- 2. Reading can never develop intellectual curiosity; it  
can only help to satisfy it. TRUE? FALSE?
- 3. The only way to develop sharper intellectual curiosity  
is to *determine* to become more interested in external phe-  
nomena. TRUE? FALSE?
- 4. All books, no matter of what sort, should be read in the  
same way: in one continuous sitting, until the book is fin-  
ished. TRUE? FALSE?
- 5. In all your reading, you should be more conscious of  
your eye-movements than of content or thought.  
TRUE? FALSE?

Reverse the page to check on your answers.

The first statement is true; all the others are false.

## 1. How Intellectual Curiosity Influences Concentration

*Any person of normal intelligence can concentrate.*

Two things are necessary:

He must, first of all, *want* to concentrate.

Secondly, he must have the background to *understand* what he is trying to concentrate on.

If you were suddenly confronted by an armed thug leveling a revolver at your midriff, you would have no doubt about your ability to concentrate. Your mind would not wander off to unrelated subjects. Your concentration on the gun, on the means of escape, on the methods for saving your life would be a triumph of perfection. Why would concentration be so easy? Obviously, because you have an overwhelming interest in remaining alive.

You can concentrate 100 per cent on your reading provided you are so eager to do that reading that nothing else in the world possesses a comparable interest during the time you have the book open before you. But also, provided that what you are reading makes sense and is not just a meaningless jumble of words.

The twin keys to concentration are *curiosity* and *background*.

Suppose you idly picked up a sociology text from the library shelves. Would concentration on its pages be easy? Probably not. But suppose you were going to take an important test next week—a test which would have an influence on your future success—and this sociology book would materially increase your chances of passing that test. Would concentration then be easier? I think it would; for you would have a personal and acute interest in everything the book had to say.

Notwithstanding your personal interest, however, if you knew nothing whatever—absolutely nothing—about sociology, concentration would be more difficult than if you brought to the book a mind that had had some training in analyzing sociological trends and in understanding sociological terminology.

The ability to concentrate is certainly an essential facet of reading skill. This ability can be developed in two ways:

1. By sharpening your intellectual curiosity.

## 2. By building up your intellectual background.

What is intellectual curiosity? Intellectual curiosity is an eager, insatiable desire to learn new things. It is an unquenchable thirst after knowledge. It is a restless mental urge to acquire facts, skills, understanding. It is a ceaseless inquisitiveness about people, about science, art, literature, politics, economics, law, philosophy, psychology, mechanics, biology, and on and on and on without stop or hindrance. To express the whole thing in a single phrase, intellectual curiosity is keen mental alertness to external phenomena.

## 2. How Sharp Is Your Intellectual Curiosity?

Perhaps, before we continue, you would be interested in determining the sharpness of your own intellectual curiosity.

Here is a five-minute test that will indicate with sufficient reliability for our purposes the keenness of your mental alertness to external phenomena.

These questions test your familiarity with an important facet of each of twenty fields of human knowledge.

Since genuine intellectual curiosity gives its possessor no rest until steps are taken to satisfy it, you should be able to make at least rough and approximate answers to most of the questions below before you may consider that your intellectual curiosity is sharp enough for practical purposes.

### *The Questions*

1. **CURRENT EVENTS:** What was the most important happening today, in respect to the international scene?
2. **HISTORY:** What is the significance of the battle of Waterloo?
3. **GEOGRAPHY:** Name the temperature zones of the world.
4. **MUSIC:** What is the essential difference between a symphony and a concerto?
5. **BIOLOGY:** What is the theory of evolution?
6. **ASTRONOMY:** Name the planets of the solar system.
7. **CHEMISTRY:** What is a catalytic agent?
8. **MATHEMATICS:** What is the essential quality of an isosceles triangle?
9. **ART:** Name four famous Dutch painters.
10. **PSYCHOLOGY:** What is the theory of behaviorism?

11. PHILOSOPHY: Describe the philosophy of Kant.
12. BIOGRAPHY: What relationship was there between Boswell and Johnson?
13. PHYSICS: Who is responsible for enunciating the famous principle, "To every action there is an equal and opposite reaction"?
14. LOGIC: What is a syllogism?
15. SOCIOLOGY: What is sociology?
16. LITERATURE: What is an epic? Name one.
17. POETRY: Name a famous blind English poet.
18. ANTHROPOLOGY: Who was Cro-Magnon man?
19. GEOLOGY: What was the Ice Age?
20. ECONOMICS: What is the Law of Diminishing Returns?

### 3. A Plan for Sharpening Your Intellectual Curiosity

I offer you, in the pages to follow, a plan of exciting reading among mature and difficult books: a plan of reading intended to sharpen your intellectual curiosity, build your intellectual background, and, as a direct result, increase your reading skill.

A plan that is *intended* to do these things, not *guaranteed* to do them. The results depend wholly on your own enthusiasm and perseverance.

If I may be permitted a little repetition, you will recall that this book is in large part based on John Dewey's principle that one learns by doing. From the first grade of elementary school on, you have been learning how to read by actually reading.

To extend Dewey's principle, we may say that one becomes an expert by applying oneself to, and eventually overcoming, gradually greater and greater obstacles. So you become an expert reader only by reading books of greater and greater difficulty.

The plan that I offer asks you to read eight books, ranging in difficulty from an exciting biography to an extremely difficult book on mathematics. The eight books, in order of difficulty, cover: biography, American history, psychology, art and music, biology, science, education, mathematics.

These eight books, if read honestly and intelligently, will give you a tremendous push toward building your background and sharpening your intellectual curiosity.

They will take four to eight weeks of concentrated reading. These can easily be the most productive weeks of your entire intellectual life.

But of course they will be only a start.

Perhaps, however, a start is all you'll need.

Once finished, these eight books may build up a momentum that will carry you along on a road of high literary adventure, the end of which will never be in sight.

Each book, a little more difficult than its predecessor, will increase, by virtue of its added difficulty, your skill in concentration and comprehension.

These are the eight books:

*Lust for Life*, by Irving Stone

*Fantastic Interim*, by Henry Morton Robinson

*The Human Mind*, by Karl Menninger

*The Arts*, by Hendrik Willem van Loon

*The Human Body*, by Logan Clendening

*Treasury of Science*, edited by Harlow Shapley

*Liberal Education*, by Mark Van Doren

*Mathematics for the Million*, by Lancelot Hogben

#### 4. We Learn by Doing

Perhaps we might start this section by talking about sea food. To name the most popular forms, there are shrimp, lobster, steamed and raw clams, and fried, stewed, and raw oysters.

Let us say that, for private reasons of your own, you wish to develop a taste for sea food. How would you go about it? Would you follow Coué's once popular method of repeating every morning as you awoke, "Day by day in every way I am growing fonder and fonder of sea food"?

Or would you attack the problem in a more reasonable manner—namely, by practical and personal experience?

You would go to Lundy's, in Sheepshead Bay, Brooklyn, and order some boiled shrimp with horseradish sauce, or perhaps deep-fried shrimp, or shrimp curry; for shrimp, to the sea food tyro, is the least difficult of the scaleless fish to develop a taste for. And if the shrimp were big and firm and freshly cooked, as they would

be at Lundy's, you would find them surprisingly pleasant and tasty. Then, some time later, you would return to Lundy's (or perhaps go to Barney's on Fordham Road in the Bronx) and make a brave attempt at lobster, starting first with the slightly camouflaged forms, lobster thermidor or lobster Newburgh. Eventually you would graduate to lobster in garlic sauce, and cold boiled lobster with mayonnaise, and finally fresh broiled lobster.

Your next adventure would be with clams. You'd first savor their wholly indescribable flavor by trying clam chowder, and then, overcoming an understandable squeamishness, you'd make a valiant stab at a dozen steamers, popping each one into melted butter and clam broth and then downing it manfully without making too wry a face or feeling too completely nauseous. It would be a short step, following that novel experience, to raw clams, and thence to that prince of sea food delicacies, succulent blue point oysters on the half-shell.

Within a short time, if your courage and stomach held out, you'd be a connoisseur of sea food, a king among gourmets, a person to whom gustatory enjoyment had taken on a new meaning.

Why this prologue on sea food? To illustrate a point about intellectual curiosity, about reading difficult books.

Intellectual curiosity can be developed only by practical, firsthand personal experience, by courageously coming out of your shell and making ever wider intellectual explorations.

You cannot develop intellectual curiosity vicariously. Not by reading a book about it, not by merely *determining* to develop it, but solely by getting a firsthand taste of some of the things that one could profitably become intellectually curious about.

As Dewey has said, you learn by doing. You learn to play a violin by diligently practicing on that instrument for several hours every day. You learn to drive a car by getting behind the wheel, starting the engine, shifting into first, and driving away. You learn to paint by painting, to compose by composing, to skate by skating, to swim by jumping into the water and threshing and flailing about.

You learn to develop intellectual curiosity by reading difficult books. And you learn to read difficult books by reading books of ever-increasing difficulty.

*You learn by doing*—there is no other way.

The average reader whose intellectual curiosity is still in a latent state devotes most of his reading time to light novels. That offers a background on which we can build.

In developing a taste for sea food, we begin with shrimp, the closest in flavor and texture to commoner types of food. In learning to read difficult books, we start with biography—the closest in technique and approach to novels.

## 5. How to Read Difficult Books

### *The First Book: Lust for Life, by Irving Stone*

If you have never read biography, you may feel that the story of a man's life is too "educational" to be interesting. If that is your feeling (forgive me for putting it so bluntly), you are wrong. That truth is stranger than fiction is never so easily proved as when a particularly skillful biography or autobiography is contrasted with even the best of current or classical novels.

I am suggesting *Lust for Life* as an introduction to fictionized biographical writing for several reasons:

1. Van Gogh (whose biography this is) comes so completely, so robustly alive in its pages that you feel you have known the man intimately all your own life.

2. Not only the man, but art itself comes alive. A deeper appreciation and keener understanding of painting, a greater realization of an artist's agonies and ecstasies of creation are gratuitous dividends accruing to the reader of this intensely interesting, heartrending, almost tragic story of one of the world's greatest painters.

3. This biography in particular will stimulate in you a desire to make deeper excursions into a vast and fascinating field—a field too unfamiliar to the average person, yet too important to be neglected by anyone who wishes to consider himself educated. Art is not obscure; it is not dull. And this is the book that will prove it.

To the person who has been exclusively a novel reader, this excursion into a new field should bring two benefits:

1. Make him eager to learn more about art, more about other painters, more about the lives of other famous men and women.

2. Begin to put a discernibly sharper edge on his intellectual curiosity.

As soon as you have tasted the delights of biographical writing, you will want to venture farther afield. Try these:

*The Story of San Michele*, by Axel Munthe

*Star-Gazer*, by Zsolt Harsanyi

*Roughly Speaking*, by Louise Randall Pierson

*Yankee from Olympus*, by Catherine Drinker Bowen

*Country Lawyer*, by Bellamy Partridge

*An American Doctor's Odyssey*, by Victor Heiser

*Abraham Lincoln*, by Carl Sandburg

*Midchannel*, by Ludwig Lewisohn

From shrimp to lobster—from biography to history. Many books on history are "textbookish." They were not primarily intended for pleasurable reading. But if you choose discriminatingly, you will find a few volumes which are more fascinating than the best novels. The second of our eight books is the most exciting study of American history it has ever been my good fortune to read.

*The Second Book: Fantastic Interim, by Henry  
Morton Robinson*

It is, I think, not too presumptuous to say that the first duty of an educated American is to understand the history of his country. Not simply *know* it, mind you, but *understand* it. And by history I do not mean the dry-as-dust catalogue of dates, beginning with 1492, with which children are tormented in the grades and in high school. I do not mean the fleshless bones of lists of battles, presidential campaigns, and constitutional amendments, as described in lackluster words in many a college text and by many a superannuated professor to half-dozing college sophomores. No—not that kind of history, which in large part can be held accountable for the antipathy of most adults toward reading about the growing pains of our country. But rather, history as a mirror of life in America—*your* life, the lives of your friends and relatives and neighbors. In times such as these, a keen, penetrating insight into America's past is much more than merely a duty; it is a necessity.



It is partly for that reason that a volume of American history appears on a list of the books that will contribute most to a widening of your intellectual horizons. Do not be alarmed at the thought of having to plow through the mazes of American history. *Fantastic Interim* has the swiftness of a detective story, the suspense of a Dashiell Hammett thriller, the intimacy of a personal letter. It's all about you! What you did, what you saw, what you read about in your daily paper, what you lived through in the twenty-three incredible years between the signing of the Armistice ending World War I and the dropping of the bombs on Pearl Harbor which kicked us into a second world cataclysm in 1941. About that fantastic interim between two disasters, and what happened to 130,000,000 people under the so-called leadership of handsome, ineffectual Warren Harding; of penny-pinching, inarticulate, tinny-voiced Cal Coolidge; of the great engineer, the unapproachable Herbert Hoover. About the retreat from chaos under Roosevelt. About the looting of the treasury by Harding's henchmen; the tariffs that throttled a nation and a world hopefully looking to peace; the sensual excesses of a people keyed up to the drama of a mammoth war that ended too suddenly; the tragic farce of Prohibition; the suicidal inanities of a populace gone hog-wild in the Florida land boom and under the false allurements of sudden wealth from stock-market speculation; the strange, morbid spectacle of a country which hesitated to prepare for a war which its very unpreparedness made virtually inevitable.

Here is a book which can be labeled history only because it is all so tragically true. Actually it is big-time adventure. Actually it is a story so gripping that you will want to race through it at a single sitting. Actually it is an analysis of a nation which for one glorious moment held peace and world leadership in its hands and then thoughtfully, painstakingly, willfully, crazily threw it aside. Here is a book which will frequently make you want to weep with mortification, blush with shame, tremble with anger; which will sound incredible, fantastic, except that you will recall from your own memory and experience that it is all fact. Here is a book which is superb as an introduction to reading for enlightenment, for thinking, for understanding.

Robinson has written, with a pen dipped in acid and in a style breathtaking in its beauty, clarity, and trenchancy, a book that will long haunt your nights. When you have turned the last page—and you will probably not put the book down before you do—

you will be not only a more educated man and a more thoughtful reader, but, of greater significance, a better citizen, a person more capable of thinking of the future of yourself and your country. You may disagree with some of the conclusions which Robinson draws. So much the better. You will be learning to think and weigh and consider as you read.

Other rewarding books on history:

*The Crusades*, by Konrad Bercovici

*Only Yesterday*, by Frederick Lewis Allen

*Since Yesterday*, by Frederick Lewis Allen

*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, by Edward Gibbon

*They Also Ran*, by Irving Stone

*Toward a Philosophy of History*, by José Ortega y Gasset

Your reading skill, your ability to comprehend and think will be a little better when you have finished *Lust for Life* and *Fantastic Interim*. It cannot be otherwise. The cleansing properties of these two books cannot fail to have their effect on you.

The person who has a talent for writing cannot fail to be a better writer after he has written his first story or his first book. The person who has any talent for music cannot fail to be a better musician after he has learned to play a Beethoven or Sibelius or Grieg concerto. Everyone who can read at all has a talent for reading. He cannot fail to be a better, more thoughtful reader after he has finished a difficult book.

### *The Third Book: The Human Mind, by Karl Menninger*

If you did not know that a book such as this existed, that such things *were* in life, *The Human Mind* will be an eye-opener. No reading experience can measure up to this book for sheer drama, for morbid excitement, for the curing of naïveté, for an understanding of yourself, your mind, your motives, your thinking processes. This is a difficult book, a frightening book, a book that will change you.

Menninger mainly explores the abnormal mind. In doing so, he gives you a better understanding of the normal one. His book is as different from anything else ever written as clams are from

anything else you've ever eaten. Like clams, the book may repel you—at first. Repulsive or not, this book will never let you stop until you've finished every page; and there are over six hundred of them. And even when you've done, you'll never, not if you live to be one hundred and fifty, stop thinking about it.

Other fascinating psychology books:

*Exploring Your Mind*, by Albert Edward Wiggam

*The Doctor Looks at Love and Life*, by Joseph Collins

*Life: A Psychological Survey*, by Pressey, Janney, and Kuhlen

*The Fourth Book: The Arts, by Hendrik  
Willem van Loon*

Art is not obscure; it is not dull. You will remember that I made this unqualified statement some pages back. But perhaps the statement should be qualified after all.

Many years ago, when I took a required undergraduate course in art appreciation at a huge and somewhat impersonal eastern university, I found that art *was* most obscure and most depressingly dull. That was not my fault; for I believe, with Hendrik van Loon, that everyone has within him a potential sincere love of beauty, which, essentially, is all that art appreciation is.

And it certainly was not the fault of art, as Van Loon's book conclusively proved to me seven years back when I spent a breathless and delighted week reading it for the first time (I have since reread it twice, each time with greater enjoyment).

I can place the blame squarely on the shoulders of the man whose duty it was to guide two hundred ignorant, but at first not unwilling, freshmen through the labyrinths of a difficult but inherently fascinating subject. How ignominious was the failure of this man who, owing to the strict laws of libel, must unfortunately remain nameless, can be attested by the overwhelming aversion I developed for all things labeled "art" until Van Loon came to the rescue. Had my teacher merely left me in the virginal and unsullied ignorance in which I had come to him, that would have been criminal enough. But he did something far more heinous, something which was almost irreparable. He stifled, nay, he completely destroyed and wantonly murdered in me every last vestige of interest in his subject. He not only left me

uneducated, but in addition made me actively hostile to gaining any education in a most important branch of human knowledge and skill. And if one might judge from the nodding heads and squirming bodies and leaden eyes of the other 199 victims imprisoned in the lecture room where he weekly held forth for thirty-two agonizing sessions of the academic year, than his effect on the rest of the class was identical to the effect he had on me.

Assuredly, the statement which opened this section needs to be qualified. Art is not obscure; it is not dull—unless your first experiences with it are unhappy ones. If you are a newcomer to the field, Van Loon's wonderful volume will be one of the happiest experiences of your life.

A good book on any subject, read skillfully and properly—that is, for enjoyment and information, and not for the purposes of passing an examination—is far more educational and has a much more dynamic and enduring influence than the most intensive college course, if that course is in the hands of an inexperienced and uninspiring instructor.

It is fortunate for the world, and especially for the products turned out by some of our colleges, that such a book as this has been written: that such an inspiring, skillful, exciting instructor as Van Loon has the power, through the medium of the printed word, of stepping into our homes, of taking us by the hand and showing us—patiently, breezily, and enthusiastically (and before the reader has turned twenty-five pages his enthusiasm matches the author's)—that “all the Arts should have but one single purpose, and should contribute as much as it is within their own particular power to do so to the highest of all the Arts—the Art of Living.”

This book was written, says Van Loon, “to give the general reader (who perhaps has always considered this a rather remote subject) a better understanding and a greater appreciation of everything that has been done within the realm of painting and architecture and music and sculpture and the theater and most of the so-called minor arts from the beginning of time until the moment we come so close to them that we begin to lose our perspective.” Actually, this is a very modest appraisal of what Van Loon accomplishes. In addition to increasing your reading skill—as to a great degree all the eight books discussed in this chapter

will—*The Arts* will have these specific and constructive effects on you:

1. It will develop in you a hunger for beauty, not only in art, but in all the surroundings of your life.

2. It will inspire you (and this will give you Van Loon's full measure as a teacher) to do a little dabbling in, or to develop as a hobby, some one of the many arts: painting, drawing, etching, sculpture, photography, composing, or some other.

3. It will whet your appetite to see good pictures, to hear good music, to buy records and—if you can afford them—canvases: in a word, to surround your life with visible and audible beauty.

Perhaps there are more scholarly and better documented works than this one. I have found few that are as engrossing, as readable, as fascinating.

Some books, such as *Fantastic Interim* and *Lust for Life*, should be read continuously and rapidly, in one or two sittings. *The Arts*, however, is such a cornucopia of good things that it should preferably be consumed in a more leisurely and methodical fashion.

Start the book at a time when you will be able to lose yourself in it daily for a period of about two weeks. First read the front pages—the dedication, the table of contents, the list of illustrations, the foreword, and the prologue—in order to get into the mood, to get a motivating taste of the flavor of the book. Then turn to the end pages and read the suggestions under the caption "On How to Use This Book." Next, riffle through the pages and examine the multitude of delightful black-and-white and water-color drawings and read the scintillating captions under each. These mood-inducing activities—which, incidentally, should be your habitual way of preparing to read any books as long, as deep, and as inclusive as this one—will prepare you for the actual reading of the text.

Now divide the book into as many approximately equal parts as the number of days you expect to devote to it. To get the most enjoyment and value out of a book of this nature, plan on ten to twenty consecutive days' reading. Develop the discipline of returning religiously to the book every day, or nearly every day, until you have finished it. After the first few days, this will not be a hard discipline to enforce.

Other valuable and readable books on art and music:

*The Meaning of Art*, by A. Philip MacMahon

*Art for Art's Sake*, by Albert Guérard

*The Art of Enjoying Art*, by A. Philip MacMahon

*What to Listen for in Music*, by Aaron Copland

*The Lure of Music*, by Olin Downes

*Evenings with Music*, by Syd Skolsky

*Music Comes to America*, by David Ewen

We have now reached the halfway mark in our reading program. Each book has been a little more difficult, a little more demanding, a little more provocative of thought, than its predecessor.

Our next four books are, without question, *difficult*—really difficult. They are the oysters of the sea food of literature. They are deep, complex books.

And for that very reason they will do the most for your reading skill. By reading them, you will become a better reader—much better—than you could ever have hoped to be without them.

If you can eat oysters, you can eat anything. And after you have read and understood and digested the next four books, you will be able to read and understand and enjoy *any* good book.

## 6. How to Read Books of Ever Increasing Difficulty

### *The Fifth Book: The Human Body*, by Logan Clendening, M.D.

Out of the score of good books on biology, this one may seem to be an odd choice. It isn't really.

Recall that the primary aim of your reading of these eight books is to stimulate your intellectual curiosity, to develop in you a personal interest in external phenomena. Biology—the science of life—is too important a phenomenon to be neglected. And yet most of the books on the subject are impersonal, highly technical, extremely abstruse, or textbookishly dull.

*The Human Body* is warm, personal, humorous, delightful; and yet it's a difficult book, for it will make you think and work.

But because it is about you, about your health, your body, your physiological machinery, your work will be pleasant, invigorating, satisfying.

You may have to struggle with it, as you will with any difficult book. The struggle will be beneficial. The sharpening of your intellectual curiosity will be tremendous; your intellectual growth will be immediately observable; the improvement of your reading skill will be discernible.

Read it as you did *The Arts*, over a continuous period of about a week, portion by portion. Treasure the book; it is a font of knowledge, a weapon in your mastery of reading.

Other intensely interesting books on the same subject:

*The Wisdom of the Body*, by W. B. Cannon

*Man in Structure and Function*, edited by George Rosen

*Why We Behave Like Human Beings*, by George A. Dorsey

*The Sixth Book: A Treasury of Science, edited  
by Harlow Shapley, Samuel Rapport, and  
Helen Wright*

This book is the most remarkable popularization of science that I have ever seen. I am willing to indulge in superlatives because the book covers every facet of natural science from A to Izzard—astronomy, anthropology, biology, geology, entomology, ethnology, chemistry, physics, embryology, ichthyology, archeology, paleontology, heredity, medicine, psychology. It is, without exaggeration, a chart of man's complete knowledge of the planet he lives on and the multifarious inhabitants thereof and the heavens above it and the seas below it.

Not one man of intellect, but some sixty or seventy of them have collaborated on a volume which, by itself, is a liberal scientific education. As the publishers (Harper & Brothers) have accurately put it:

Here is a book crammed with excitement, oddity, wonder, even humor—a wide-ranging, fascinating treasury of the great scientific writings of all time.

It is a book imbued with the personalities of the scientific explorers themselves, fired with the excitement of their search, lit

by the body of knowledge that has resulted. For here you see the scientist at work, in his laboratory, over his test-tubes, on the mountains and in the deserts, on the bottom of the ocean and inside the earth—Madame Curie, Galileo, Ditmars, Pasteur, Hal-dane. . . . Here you can read what they themselves have had to say about the subjects they know best, about men and stars and plants and animals—about the weather, earthquakes, X-rays, rela-tivity, space, insects, radium, vampire bats, the insides of atoms and the composition of planets.

For over a year the editors searched scientific literature, assem- bling, selecting, rejecting; for months they surveyed the subject, arranging its parts into a connected basic pattern. The result is a book of really extraordinary scope and importance, a unified and completely up-to-date picture of the entire universe, from the tiniest bit of living matter to the star galaxy so immense it beggars the imagination.

I am reproducing below the complete table of contents, as it will show, better than any description of the book can, what riches are here to stimulate the imagination, what delights await the fortunate reader, what jewels and precious nuggets are contained in its pages, what great minds of the past and present stand ready to instruct and entertain.

### *Part One: INTRODUCTION*

ON SHARING IN THE CONQUESTS OF SCIENCE *by Harlow Shapley*

### *Part Two: SCIENCE AND THE SCIENTIST*

THE WONDER OF THE WORLD

*by Sir J. Arthur Thomson and Patrick Geddes*

WE ARE ALL SCIENTISTS *by T. H. Huxley*

SCIENTISTS ARE LONELY MEN *by Oliver La Farge*

TURTLE EGGS FOR AGASSIZ *by Dallas Lore Sharp*

THE AIMS AND METHODS OF SCIENCE

*by Roger Bacon, Albert Einstein, Sir Arthur Eddington,  
Ivan Pavlov, and Raymond B. Fosdick*



## Part Three: THE PHYSICAL WORLD

### A. THE HEAVENS

- A THEORY THAT THE EARTH MOVES AROUND THE SUN  
by *Nicholas Copernicus*  
PROOF THAT THE EARTH MOVES by *Galileo Galilei*  
THE ORDERLY UNIVERSE by *Forest Ray Moulton*  
IS THERE LIFE ON OTHER WORLDS? by *Sir James Jeans*  
THE MILKY WAY AND BEYOND by *Sir Arthur Eddington*

### B. THE EARTH

- A YOUNG MAN LOOKING AT ROCKS by *Hugh Miller*  
GEOLOGICAL CHANGE by *Sir Archibald Geike*  
EARTHQUAKES—WHAT ARE THEY?  
by *The Reverend James B. Macelwane, S.J.*  
LAST DAYS OF ST. PIERRE by *Fairfax Downey*  
MAN, MAKER OF WILDERNESS by *Paul B. Sears*  
WHAT MAKES THE WEATHER by *Wolfgang Langeweische*

### C. MATTER, ENERGY, PHYSICAL LAW

- NEWTONIANA  
DISCOVERIES by *Sir Isaac Newton*  
MATHEMATICS, THE MIRROR OF CIVILIZATION by *Lancelot Hogben*  
GENIUS AND STUPIDITY by *Eric T. Bell*  
EXPERIMENTS AND IDEAS by *Benjamin Franklin*  
EXPLORING THE ATOM by *Sir James Jeans*  
ON ATOMS—SLIGHTLY SARCASTIC by *C. C. Furnas*  
TOURING THE ATOMIC WORLD by *Henry Schacht*  
THE DISCOVERY OF RADIUM by *Eve Curie*  
THE TAMING OF ENERGY by *George Russell Harrison*  
SPACE, TIME AND EINSTEIN by *Paul R. Heyl*  
THE FOUNDATIONS OF CHEMICAL INDUSTRY by *Robert E. Rose*  
THE CHEMICAL REVOLUTION by *Waldemar Kaempffert*  
SCIENCE IN WAR AND AFTER by *George Russell Harrison*

## Part Four: THE WORLD OF LIFE

### A. THE RIDDLE OF LIFE

- THE NATURE OF LIFE by *W. J. V. Osterhout*  
THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ORGANISMS  
by *Sir J. Arthur Thomson and Patrick Geddes*

LEEUEWENHOEK: FIRST OF THE MICROBE HUNTERS *by Paul de Kruif*  
WHERE LIFE BEGINS *by George W. Gray*

## B. THE SPECTACLE OF LIFE

ON BEING THE RIGHT SIZE *by J. B. S. Haldane*

PARASITISM AND DEGENERATION

*by David Starr Jordan and Vernon Lyman Kellogg*

FLOWERING EARTH *by Donald Culross Peattie*

A LOBSTER; OR, THE STUDY OF ZOOLOGY *by T. H. Huxley*

THE LIFE OF THE SIMPLEST ANIMALS

*by David Starr Jordan and Vernon Lyman Kellogg*

SECRETS OF THE OCEAN *by William Beebe*

THE WARRIOR ANTS *by Caryl P. Haskins*

THE VAMPIRE BAT

*by Raymond L. Ditmars and Arthur M. Greenhall*

ANCESTORS *by Gustav Eckstein*

## C. THE EVOLUTION OF LIFE

DARWINISMS

DARWIN AND "THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES" *by Sir Arthur Keith*

GREGOR MENDEL AND HIS WORK *by Hugo Iltis*

THE COURTSHIP OF ANIMALS *by Julian Huxley*

MAGIC ACRES *by Alfred Toombs*

## Part Five: THE WORLD OF MAN

### A. FROM APE TO CIVILIZATION

THE EVIDENCE OF THE DESCENT OF MAN FROM SOME LOWER FORM  
*by Charles Darwin*

THE UPSTART OF THE ANIMAL KINGDOM *by Earnest A. Hooton*

MISSING LINKS *by John R. Baker*

THE POPOL VUH

LESSONS IN LIVING FROM THE STONE AGE *by Vilhjalmur Stefansson*

RACIAL CHARACTERS OF THE BODY *by Arthur Keith*

### B. THE HUMAN MACHINE

YOU AND HEREDITY *by Amram Scheinfeld*

BIOGRAPHY OF THE UNBORN *by Margaret Shea Gilbert*

HOW THE HUMAN BODY IS STUDIED *by Sir Arthur Keith*

VARIATIONS ON A THEME BY DARWIN *by Julian Huxley*

### C. THE CONQUEST OF DISEASE

THE HIPPOCRATIC OATH

HIPPOCRATES THE GREEK—THE END OF MAGIC *by Logan Clendening*

AN INQUIRY INTO THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF THE VARIOLAE

VACCINAE *by Edward Jenner*

THE HISTORY OF THE KINE POX *by Benjamin Waterhouse*

LOUIS PASTEUR AND THE CONQUEST OF RABIES

*by René Vallery-Radot*

LEPROSY IN THE PHILIPPINES *by Victor Heiser*

WAR MEDICINE AND WAR SURGERY *by George W. Gray*

### D. MAN'S MIND

THINKING *by James Harvey Robinson*

IMAGINATION CREATRIX *by John Livingston Lowes*

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SIGMUND FREUD *by A. A. Brill*

BRAIN STORMS AND BRAIN WAVES *by George W. Gray*

### E. MAN'S FUTURE

THE FUTURE OF MAN AS AN INHABITANT OF THE EARTH

*by Kirtley F. Mather*

SCIENCE AND THE FUTURE *by David Dietz*

THE LAST JUDGMENT *by J. B. S. Haldane*

Other richly rewarding books on science are:

*Microbe Hunters*, by Paul de Kruif

*Riddles of Science*, by Sir J. Arthur Thomson

*A Short History of Science*, by Sedgwick, Tyler, and Bigelow

### *The Seventh Book: Liberal Education, by Mark Van Doren*

No list of books intended to accelerate intellectual growth would be complete without at least one volume dealing directly with education. Some years back, when I was making tentative plans for the present book, I knew I should want to recommend to the serious reader a volume which explored, in an adult but nonpedagogical manner, the problems of learning and teaching. Careful search in a number of libraries failed to disclose a single title which promised to be both generally stimulating and uni-

versally appealing. Many were the books, of course, which were excellent for people already interested in the problems of education—teachers and writers and students of pedagogy; not one seemed to me capable of *creating* such an interest.

And then, by rare good luck, late in 1943 Henry Holt and Company published a slim volume which had everything in it I could possibly desire; and much more that I had not even thought of.

*Liberal Education*, by Mark Van Doren, is a thin volume. And yet it is next to the most difficult book on this list—because it will force your mind to engage in feverish cerebration. It will raise doubts; it will make you weigh and consider and question. It is the sort of book which remains for a long time in the mind. Of the eight books, it is the one which most will cause post-reading reflection, which most will raise the kind of doubts that may take you years or a lifetime to resolve. Of the eight books, it is the one which will make you the unhappiest after you have finished it and put it away. If this statement does not seem to make much sense, you will understand what I mean after you have read the book.

*The Eighth Book: Mathematics for the Million,  
by Lancelot Hogben*

In the preface to what I consider a masterpiece of technical literature written in nontechnical language, Lancelot Hogben assures the reader:

I wrote this book in hospital during a long illness for my own fun. A few friends from among the million or so intelligent people who have been frightened by mathematics while at school persuaded me to publish it. . . . With no pretensions to be a specialist I want to make two things clear. The first is that I have written it in my capacity as a private citizen interested in education. The other is that, whatever objections may be raised against the approach adopted and views expressed in it, it will have fulfilled its aim if it stimulates the interest and removes the inferiority complex of some of the million or so who have given up hope of learning through the usual channels.

These words set the atmosphere for the book. And this atmosphere is maintained from the very first page, in which is recounted

the humiliating experience which befell Diderot, the famous French encyclopedist, during a brief and unhappy stay at the Russian court (the cause of Diderot's humiliation was his unfamiliarity with mathematical language), right through to the very last page, in which Hogben speculates on the superiority of the motion pictures over books and blackboards in depicting mathematical symbols.

It would be untrue to pretend that *Mathematics for the Million* has the rapid pace or suspense of a mystery story. No, this is a book which you will read slowly and thoughtfully, probably sitting in a straight-backed chair at a large desk, with a few sharp pencils and a pad of scratch paper at your elbow. But you will be unaware of the slowness of your pace, for the pages will induce such furious thinking that the time will fly. You may sit with the book for two hours of an evening and cover less than one hundred pages. But it will be an exciting evening, full of adventure and discovery; and you will perceive with some surprise and annoyance the lateness of the hour and the imminence of bedtime.

It may take you a month of concentrated effort to finish the book to your satisfaction, but it will be an amazing, an eye-opening month. It will be a month that may make you realize for the first time that the laws of mathematics are the foundation on which most of our complex machine civilization was built. For the pervading philosophy of the book is that mathematics is intimately tied up with almost all of ordinary human living. A glance at the chapter titles in the table of contents will give an inkling to the method Hogben uses to prove this:<sup>1</sup>

- I. Mathematics, the Mirror of Civilization
- II. First Steps in Measurement or  
Mathematics in Prehistory
- III. The Grammar of Size, Order and Number or  
Translating Number Language
- IV. Euclid Without Tears or  
What You Can Do with Geometry
- V. From Crisis to Crossword Puzzles or  
The Beginnings of Arithmetic
- VI. The Size of the World or  
What We Can Do with Trigonometry
- VII. The Dawn of Nothing or  
How Algebra Began

<sup>1</sup> Reprinted by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

- VIII. The World Encompassed or  
Spherical Triangles
- IX. The Reformation Geometry or  
What Are Graphs
- X. The Collectivization of Arithmetic or  
How Logarithms Were Discovered
- XI. The Arithmetic of Growth and Shape or  
What the Calculus Is About
- XII. Statistics or  
The Arithmetic of Human Welfare
- Epilogue on Science

Mathematics was never taught this way in school. Your most expert teacher never breathed such delight and vitality into the subject as does Mr. Hogben, who wrote his book "during a long illness for [his] own fun." If you have some grounding in algebra and geometry, you will not have to work quite as hard as may otherwise be necessary. Do not, however, allow an incomplete background to make you feel unequal to the task. For, as Hogben has said, the aim of the work is to stimulate the interest and annihilate the inferiority complex of the million who have spent their adult years being intimidated by the very name "mathematics." And believe me, it is an aim successfully, admirably, phenomenally fulfilled.

Approach this book with the sense of being an explorer. There are mysteries to be discovered here that you cannot, before your reading begins, even conceive of. There is a broadening of the intellect to be gained that can easily change your fundamental habits of thinking. And there is entertainment for many a long home-staying evening. All these do not come to you, of course, on a silver platter. You will have to work for them, just as you have to work for any lasting benefits from reading. Your recompense will be generous indeed for the effort required.

A few other books on mathematics that you may be interested in tackling after you have successfully conquered *Mathematics for the Million*:

*Mathematical Recreations*, by Maurice Kraitchik

*Popular Mathematics*, by Denning Miller

*A Mathematics Refresher*, by A. Hooper

*Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, by Bertrand Russell

My aim in this chapter of the book is to reawaken and stimulate your intellectual curiosity, to make you *desire* to read difficult books. How to get the most out of such reading and how to develop habits of active thinking while reading will be our next immediate concern.

## *Review Test*

### *What Have You Learned About Reading?*

*Take this true-false test:*

1. Any person of normal intelligence can concentrate.  
TRUE? FALSE?
2. Personal interest and sufficient background are the keys to complete concentration.  
TRUE? FALSE?
3. Intellectual curiosity is keen mental alertness to external phenomena.  
TRUE? FALSE?
4. Reading can never develop intellectual curiosity; it can only help to satisfy it.  
TRUE? FALSE?
5. To learn to read better, one must try to read harder and harder books.  
TRUE? FALSE?
6. The only way to develop sharper intellectual curiosity is to determine to become intellectually curious.  
TRUE? FALSE?
7. Biography is generally too "educational" to be as interesting as a good novel.  
TRUE? FALSE?
8. It is the duty of an educated person to understand the history of his country.  
TRUE? FALSE?
9. All books, no matter of what sort, should be read the same way: in one continuous sitting, until the book is finished.  
TRUE? FALSE?
10. The only proper way to read a book is consecutively, page by page; a reader should never look at end pages, or illustrations, before he starts to read.  
TRUE? FALSE?
11. A difficult book is a book which requires hard work and hard thinking before it is finished.  
TRUE? FALSE?
12. Interest in a book can be heightened by a careful perusal of its table of contents, its preface or introduction, its appendices, and other such pertinent material.  
TRUE? FALSE?

13. Many books should be approached in a spirit of exploration.  
TRUE? FALSE?

To check your answers, reverse the book.

Key: 1—T, 2—T, 3—T, 4—F, 5—T, 6—F, 7—F, 8—T, 9—F,  
10—F, 11—T, 12—T, 13—T.



## CHAPTER X

# How to Develop Habits of Active Thinking

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### *Preview*

*You will learn:*

- The difference between active thinking and passive thinking.
- Why it is necessary to draw conclusions.
- Whether you are sufficiently skeptical.
- How to become a well-rounded reader.
- The names of books that have influenced important people.

CHAPTER X DEALS WITH THE ACQUISITION OF IMPORTANT MENTAL DISCIPLINES WHICH ARE DESIGNED TO MAKE YOU A MORE ALERT AND MORE RESPONSIVE READER.

## *What Do You Know About Reading?*

*Take this true-false test:*

→1. Active thinking means fully understanding what an author is saying. TRUE? FALSE?

→2. A good reader always draws the "right" conclusions. TRUE? FALSE?

→3. Active thinking somewhat slows down the reading rate. TRUE? FALSE?

→4. Never skip any parts of a book; rather, force yourself to read every line with great care if you wish really to understand the book. TRUE? FALSE?

To check your answers, reverse the book.

All the statements are false.

## 1. What Is Active Thinking?

Active thinking and sound reasoning are natural concomitants of skillful reading.

"The man who reads well is the man who thinks well; who has a background for opinion and a touchstone for judgment," an editorial in the *Saturday Review of Literature* points out. How true this is you can appreciate by analyzing what goes on in your mind as you read.

First, as has been said, if you have mastered the technique of efficient reading, your mind is oblivious to the actual words on the page before you. In your mind's eye you see only pictures, movement, scenery.

But these pictures, this movement and scenery are mere symbols—symbols of ideas, of thought; of the author's ideas and thoughts.

Deep down in your mind you are grasping these thoughts, following the ideas.

And, if you have developed habits of active thinking while you read, you are also either forming conclusions of your own from the author's implications or coming to some agreement or disagreement with the conclusions which the author presents to you.

Merely grasping an author's ideas is *passive thinking*. But constantly drawing conclusions of your own, or responding in agreement or disagreement, is *active thinking*.

Active thinking is one of the aids to skillful reading. It is also one of the very valuable results of doing a large amount of the proper kinds of difficult reading.

It is directly the careful and thorough reading of difficult books which will develop your habits of active thinking.

It is true that no one can learn to think more competently than his brain power permits. But many people have never developed their thinking powers to the full potential capacity of their native intelligence. That is a fact which modern trends in psychology have underscored again and again in recent years.

Often you do not realize how actively and powerfully you are able to think until some catalytic agent, like a deep and difficult book, has forced you to draw on powers long dormant.

Some people never realize it because they never put themselves to the test. They limp along on two mental cylinders even though the other six are there, in good condition and ready for use. What is missing? *The spark of interest and desire.*

Take an eight-cylinder car. A car's power and ease of performance depend on the size and number of its cylinders. But those eight cylinders will not function properly, if they move at all, unless eight spark plugs are in the motor, each constantly firing its own cylinder.

The mind works in much the same way. Intellectual curiosity and personal interest are the spark plugs of the mind's cylinders. Without them, many minds, potentially capable of eight-cylinder thinking, produce only one- or two-cylinder performance.

Frivolous books, poor writing, badly thought-out and ineptly presented ideas will stifle, or at least fail to evoke, active thinking on the part of the reader. An unvaried diet of such reading will foul his mental spark plugs and vitiate his reading skill.

The more thinking you force your mind to do, the more capable your mind becomes of thinking actively, accurately, and deeply. The more you read difficult books, the better able you are to read them—that is, the more you increase your reading skill.

## 2. How to Draw Conclusions

No single book can teach you how to think, although many books are capable of making you think.

Many years ago Abbé Ernest Dimnet wrote a forthright and scholarly little volume which, either by rare commercial foresight or by wonderful good luck, he called *The Art of Thinking*. As you can guess, the sale was tremendous. The number of people who were dissatisfied with their own methods of thinking and who, furthermore, were willing to pay for a book which they believed would spectacularly increase their mental ability ran, according to the publisher, to over a quarter of a million. Now, of course, *The Art of Thinking* did not teach anyone to think—nor, for that matter, did it either promise or profess to do so. Yet those readers who were sanguine enough to believe that the rules of thinking

could be learned in the same manner as, say, the rules of efficient habits in reading, or the rules of chess or backgammon or Russian Bank, did learn to think better—that is, they did if they read the book carefully and thoroughly and with a sincere attempt to understand its deep philosophy. Not because Dimnet offered them any foolproof rules to follow, but simply because the book itself was so deep and valid and difficult—that is, thought provoking—that the mere act of honestly reading it gave them a little of that all-important practice in thinking which *alone* can increase mental power.

For this previously stated principle is an undeniable fact: while one may not be able to increase his thinking ability beyond the limits of the native power with which nature has endowed him, he can, by practice, at least take advantage of the full range of those powers which may possibly be dormant or near dormant. To put it more simply, each person has a mental limit *beyond* which he cannot hope to go; many people, however, because neither they themselves nor external conditions have forced them to, often do not even begin to approach that limit.

*Developing habits of active thinking by means of honest attempts to understand and appreciate difficult reading is—as Dimnet goes to great pains to emphasize—one of the few productive and practical methods of awakening dormant thinking powers.*

One facet of active thinking while reading is *drawing conclusions*. There is no trick for you to learn which will make it easy for you to draw conclusions. Only great and continuous practice will build a mastery of the habit. And certainly no one can tell you how to draw the “right” conclusions; it is always a matter of hot debate even among the most advanced thinkers (in fact, the more advanced the thinkers, the more fiery the debate) as to just what the “right” conclusions from any given set of facts or circumstances may be. What is “right” or “wrong” is, however, of little significance. In so far as active thinking is concerned, the only important thing is that you do draw conclusions instead of merely absorbing and passively accepting what an author says. For then you will be an active-thinking reader instead of a passive-thinking one.

Here are two reading selections for you to work on. I do not promise that they will immediately sharpen your ability to draw conclusions; but I do maintain, emphatically, that your attempt to draw conclusions from them will start you on the sort of prac-

tice which, if carried on in all your future reading, will help you considerably to become an active-thinking reader.

I ask you not merely to draw *emotional* conclusions—that is too easy and of little benefit; but to put your conclusions into words and to write those words down. After each section of the first selection, and at the end of the second selection, you will find some questions, with space for written answers. Gathering your thoughts and expressing them in words is exactly the type of practice that is most beneficial. There will be no answers with which you may compare the results of your thinking; for two people may come to quite different conclusions from reading the same selection, and really no one is so truly omniscient as to be able to decide infallibly which conclusion is the “right” one.

### *Active Thinking Exercise 1*

#### NEGRO RIGHTS <sup>1</sup>

#### They Will Come When the White South's Fear Is Divided into Rational Parts

The Senate reconvenes, and near the top of its agenda is a problem left over from the Civil War. It is a bill to abolish poll taxes, one of the last remaining legal devices by which most southern states prevent Negroes and poor whites from voting. Even if the Senate passes it, this bill will not give southern Negroes the vote. Neither will the recent Supreme Court decision which declared the Texas anti-Negro primary law unconstitutional. The federal government can chivy the white South from one extralegal dodge to another, but the southern Negro will never really vote until the southern white man is no longer afraid of him.

The white South neither dissembles nor divides on this point. It is simply aroused to a pitch of frenzied and unanimous resistance to change. In the midst of a war for freedom abroad, we are therefore treated to the threat of a filibuster in the Senate, obscene cries of “nigger-lover!” in the Florida and Alabama primary campaigns, and increasing racial tension throughout the country. In Harlem, which will probably send its first Negro to Congress this year as a result of redistricting, the leading candidate, A.

<sup>1</sup> An editorial in *Life*, April 24, 1944. Copyright 1944 by Time, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

Clayton Powell, is taking a leaf from the southern white's book and is running on a Negro-First platform. ("I will represent the Negro people first; I will represent after that all the other American people.") Never before have Negroes been so outspokenly bitter about America's refusal to give them equal status in the Army, the Navy and industry, and never before have Negro leaders been so active on behalf of Negro rights. America's No. 1 social problem, its great, uncured, self-inflicted wound, is aching violently, perhaps reaching a crisis.

*Question:* Do you believe that Negroes should receive equal status with whites in the Army, Navy, and industry? Enlarge on your answer. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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### His Vote and Your Daughter

The Negro problem is so complex and so intertwined with all our other national vices and virtues that it is almost incurable in its own terms. It is possible, however, to distinguish between rational and irrational approaches to it, and also to decide what parts of it are primarily of federal concern, and what are primarily a community or personal responsibility.

In this job Americans are lucky to have some very timely expert advice. The Carnegie Corporation seven years ago asked Dr. Gunnar Myrdal, a distinguished Swedish sociologist, to undertake a comprehensive survey of the American Negro, and his study has just been published under the name of *The American Dilemma*. The dilemma, of course, is this: the basic tenets of the American creed make all men free and equal in rights. Yet in fact we deny equal rights to our largest minority, and observe a caste system which we not only criticize in other nations but refuse to defend in ourselves. This makes us living liars—a psychotic case among the nations.

The South has more Negroes and therefore more of the psy-

chosis than the country as a whole. What, exactly, is the South afraid of?

Myrdal finds that the chief white fear is the fear of intermarriage. Other fears he ranks as follows, in the order of their descending importance to the whites: fear of personal and social equality, of joint use of schools and other public places, of equal voting, of equality in law courts, and of equal economic opportunity. In other words, if the South has to change, it will prove least unwilling to give the Negro an equal right to work; next, to give him legal justice; next, the vote, etc.; but it treasures the Jim Crow laws and it will never, never permit intermarriage. However, Myrdal found the Negro ranks his grievances in exactly the reverse order. He wants fair breadwinning opportunities most of all, legal justice and the vote next; but he does not make a major point of segregation, and his ambition to marry whites exists only in the whites' minds.

There would therefore seem to be a basis for progress. But not when all phases of the problem are woven together into a single flag emblazoned "white supremacy." In effect, the North asks the South: "Why won't you let the Negro vote?" The South replies, "How would you like your daughter to marry a Negro?"

Even a moderate, gentlemanly Southerner like Senator Maybank of South Carolina slips this cog of logic. In the Senate last week, he accused "agitators" of trying "to upset our election laws and our customs of segregation." There are agitators who have both these objectives, but the poll tax bill before the Senate does not aim at them. The franchise and segregation are not the same thing. They can be made to seem the same only when the flag of white supremacy wraps them together. That flag conceals the only rational method by which the Negro problem can be ameliorated: the method of dividing it into manageable parts.

*Questions:* If you believe that equality should be offered to Negroes, in which of the six aspects of American life listed by the editorial do you think the first start should be made? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

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If you believe that equality should be withheld in any of the six aspects, name it or them and give your reasons for such discrimination. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Are your reasons logical or emotional ones? \_\_\_\_\_

### The Federal Role

There are only two aspects of the Negro problem which primarily concern the federal government. These are the Negro's political and economic rights. Consider first job and pay discrimination, the thing the Negro hates most and the white treasures least. The federal government's chief way of ameliorating this form of injustice is powerful though negative: refusal to use federal funds, as in war contracts, to perpetuate the caste system. This principle seems rather obvious. But as a practical matter, it is worth remembering that Roosevelt never would have set up the Fair Employment Practice committee if astute Negro politicians had not threatened him with a national Negro march on Washington. And even the FEPC cannot change a nationwide industrial prejudice. It is up to the individuals, corporations and unions who compose our economy, North and South. War industries seem to have a better record on this score in Texas than in Michigan.

### The Personal Problem

Political and economic justice for the Negro lie at the end of a long, rough road. And if we get there, the Negro problem will still be with us. The rest of the solution, however, cannot rightly be considered a federal concern.

*Question:* If political and economic justice for the Negro can eventually be reached, do you agree that there will still be a "Negro problem"? \_\_\_\_\_ . Explain your answer. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

There are several theoretical solutions to the Negro problem which involve neither intermarriage nor an outrage to the Amer-

ican creed. There is, for example, the theory of "parallel civilizations"—complete equality of opportunity for Negro and white, but complete segregation too. As an over-all solution this may or may not work. It is beginning to work in North Carolina, where Negroes vote. It might never work in South Carolina or Mississippi, where the Negro population is much bigger. But nobody knows what will work until they try, and the more experiments, the more discoveries.

Negroes are not uniformly distributed over the U.S. This being so, the problem of their social relations with whites does not call for a federal solution. The problem is both too various and too personal. And anyway, as Lord Bryce said, "good manners cannot be imposed by statute."

If this limitation on federal responsibility were more clearly recognized in the North, the South might be less given to blind fears, and might even start using words like "our institutions" with more precision. The other three-quarters of the country cannot permit the South to disfranchise its Negroes forever. And neither can the South; for all men want to be rational.

Three generations ago the South had a consistent and respectable theory to defend its behavior. The Negro was a lower species of man and his caste was fixed by his Creator.

*Question:* Do you agree or disagree with the last sentence? Justify your answer. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

But this theory is no longer respectable; educated Southerners no longer believe it; the white man, says Myrdal, is "losing confidence in the theory which gave reason and meaning to his way of life." That is why Myrdal thinks the southern way of life must and will change. And he adds:

"The Negroes are a minority, and they are poor and suppressed, but they have the advantage that they can fight whole-heartedly. The whites have all the power but they are split in their moral personality. Their better selves are with the insurgents. The Negroes do not need any other allies."

*Question:* Have you given enough thought to the "Negro problem" to have arrived at some kind of solution? \_\_\_\_\_. If so, explain briefly. \_\_\_\_\_

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It isn't very easy, is it, to put your conclusions into words even after, as you believe, you have drawn them? Remember, however, that the more actively you think during your reading, the more clearly you will be able to express the results of your thinking. And, conversely, the more you practice expressing your thoughts, the more active your thinking will become as you read. You know how it is with psychoanalysis. Your psychiatrist asks you to do just one thing: *talk*. As you attempt to express the turmoil in your mind—we take for granted that turmoil exists if you have resorted to psychoanalysis—the more quickly the fog lifts, and the clearer your thoughts become. Often, because of your attempts at expression, you discover thoughts and thinking power you never knew you possessed. So it is, also, with active reading. The more active you make your reading, by practicing habits of thought expression, the more active and perspicuous your thinking becomes, and the more you discover unsuspected powers *to* think. So persevere.

### *Active Thinking Exercise 2*

#### THE RETURN OF THE HAIRBRUSH<sup>2</sup>

*To the Editor of the New York Times:*

Let me congratulate you on your publishing such sensible letters on discipline.

Misled by false conceptions of "kindness," I had discontinued spanking my children a couple of years ago, in spite of the fact that I myself had been subject to most beneficial paddlings when I was a kid.

Your correspondence made me realize that being soft with your children is not always showing them real kindness. I warned them that I would from now on resume spankings for serious offenses.

<sup>2</sup> From *The New York Times*. Reprinted with permission.

On three occasions I had to administer the hairbrush, you know where, and the complexion of the offenders after completed operations testified as to the effectiveness of the punishment. Contrary to the predictions of "progressive" educators, these whippings didn't make my boy, aged 10, and girl, aged 12, hate me. They promised to behave in the future and showed much less resentment than when I used to deprive them of pocket money or some amusement.

I shall keep spankings at a minimum, but I will certainly keep on administering these successful corrections whenever needed. If more parents would spank their offspring there would be less juvenile delinquency.

BETTY M. SCOTT.

*Questions:* Do you agree with the writer that spanking is an effective punishment for children? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_

How can one determine whether or not punishment is "effective"? \_\_\_\_\_

### 3. Active Thinking and Skillful Reading

If you are already the possessor of well-developed habits of active thinking while you read, or if, in the short space of time in which you have covered the foregoing pages of this chapter, you have begun to develop such habits, these doubtless are some of the questions which occurred to you as you worked on section 2:

1. If one of the aims of my work with this book is to read with greater rapidity, how can I afford to take time out to draw conclusions, let alone go to the effort of putting those conclusions into words?
2. Is it necessary always to put my conclusions into *words*?
3. Should these words preferably be written down if active thinking is to become an ingrained habit?

4. Are the questions I have answered indicative of the kind of conclusion I must seek to draw in all my reading? Suppose I haven't the background to draw certain conclusions?

Let me answer your questions in order.

*Answer to Question 1:* Thinking while reading does not slow your pace; on the contrary, it increases it. Thinking, even in words, is more rapid than the fastest reading; and thinking along with (or against) the author makes your concentration so deep and your involvement in your reading so active that it is an excellent way to increase your reading rate.

*Answers to Questions 2 and 3:* No, it is not always necessary to put your conclusions into words. Indeed, psychologists are still not decided whether or not all thinking is done in words (some say much thinking is done in pictures or by means of gland secretions). However, an exercise such as the one you have just completed, in which you force yourself to put your conclusions into words, tests the strength of your ability to draw conclusions. Occasional practice on your own in verbally expressing and perhaps writing down your conclusions will still further sharpen both your ability and your desire to draw them.

*Answer to Question 4:* One of the bars to a mastery of concentration, you will recall, is lack of background, resulting, of course, from a lack of the kind of intellectual curiosity which builds background. The more one becomes interested in many external phenomena, the more he builds his background for modern reading; and by just so much does he increase his reading skill.

So force yourself, if you do not already do so, to draw conclusions. Ask yourself, while you read, the sort of questions you have just been writing your answers to.

Here's an encouraging note: the more you practice drawing conclusions, the easier it becomes to draw them, and the more active becomes your ability to think while you read. And, finally, the more active your thinking, the closer you approach to the mastery of skillful reading.

#### 4. How to Develop an Alert Skepticism

All writing, of whatever character, has a moral, a message, a point, or a central idea. It used to be quite the style in fiction to ram the moral down the reader's throat (and if he choked on it,

that was *his* misfortune) and to make everything in a novel or story subordinate to the moral. Styles in fiction have, fortunately, changed; but if you will understand the noun *moral* in its very broadest sense—that is, as a “unifying idea” or “central theme”—you will agree that stories and novels still contain morals, although they contain a good deal more besides. If a moral or unifying idea were lacking, the story simply wouldn’t hold together—there would be no coherence.

Everything in art must have a message—it has to have, or art would be meaningless. Every artist attempts, by whatever medium he has chosen, to convince his reader, or audience, or spectators, that his message is true and should be accepted as truth.

In a piece of sculpture, say the “Venus de Milo,” the message is far from obscure once you look for it. It is, simply, that the female form looks like this, and is, furthermore, beautiful. The sculptor has chosen stone as his medium with which to convince the spectators of the truth of his message.

In *Of Human Bondage* the author, W. Somerset Maugham, has a message. Maugham uses incidents, events, plot, action—all these are his media just as stone is the sculptor’s medium—to prove that two human beings such as Philip and Mildred—the one maddeningly patient and forgiving, the other infuriatingly stupid, selfish, and callous—could conceivably exist. Because Maugham is a skillful writer, he makes Philip and Mildred seem real and convincing.

Willem Hendrik van Loon had a message—he admitted it quite baldly on the very first page of *The Arts* when he said, you recall, “All the Arts should have but one single purpose, and should contribute as much as it is within their own particular power to do so to the highest of all the Arts—the Art of Living.” That’s what he hoped to prove in his book. That was his message, his moral—and he made no bones about it.

Everything you read—books, articles, stories, news items, advertisements—is trying to tell you something, trying to get its message across, trying to make you believe. To *understand* the message is not enough; to *draw conclusions* is not completely enough; you must also become sufficiently alert and skeptical to make a habit of deciding, in the light of your own knowledge, background, and experience, whether the message is acceptable, whether it is worthy of implicit belief and trust. As J. Donald Adams wrote in *The New York Times Book Review*:

All our lives most of us, and perhaps most of all those in whom the habit of reading is ingrained, have to guard and fight against that strange mesmerism which is resident in print. Statements that have the peculiar sanction of type, and which, if orally made, we would brush away like a buzzing fly, often receive our respectful attention merely because they have achieved the spurious dignity of print. Sometimes I think the best we can get from a formal education is the inflexible habit of examining every new fact and every new conclusion drawn from fact, warily from top to toe. An education, however conducted, that neglects the skeptical approach is no education at all. And if the wisdom of the world is in books, so, too, is a vast amount of nonsense.

How can you best sharpen your faculty for alert skepticism? An effective habit to develop is the daily reading of newspaper editorials. Not those of one newspaper only, for then you would generally be seeing only one side of the story and as a result would eventually become conditioned to see just that one side—so much so that in time your skepticism would be in danger of vanishing, your critical faculty of drying up. Read, rather, the editorial opinion of newspapers of differing political color on the same day. Then you can contrast the extremist views of both sides of a question.

Are you a dyed-in-the-wool Republican? Fine. But for the sake of your reading skill and in the interests of active thinking and sound reasoning, you should occasionally read the editorial columns of a fanatically Democratic newspaper. You will probably not believe what you read, and that is the very means by which your skepticism will become sharper and sharper. (But make sure you understand what a writer is saying before you disagree with him!)

Are you a staunch supporter of the Democratic Party? Make a practice of occasional reading of the editorials of strongly Republican newspapers.

Are you a middle-of-the-roader? Read both the antis and the pros; weigh and balance; and thus feed and stimulate your critical faculties.

To develop an alert skepticism, do two things:

1. Keep your mind open. Test, balance, weigh, consider when you read. The printed word is not gospel, and should not be considered as such.

2. Go out of your way to hear, and to understand, the other fellow's side of the story. Read opinion, lots of it, that is opposed to your own instinctive prejudices, fears, likes, and dislikes.

Above all, as J. Donald Adams puts it, don't be "mesmerized" by a page of print. *Think* while you read; do not blindly and passively accept!

## 5. How to Become a Well-Rounded Reader

The most expert swimmer in the world will find it tough going when he has to battle a ten-mile-an-hour current. Bill Tilden himself would play a poor game of tennis on a muddy court. And no matter how skillful a reader you are, your skill goes for naught if you read the wrong things or not enough of the right ones.

You have come a long way in your study of the principles of skillful reading. If you have worked faithfully, not only have you already increased your skill as a reader, but, of perhaps greater importance, you have begun to build those habits which will help you still further to augment that skill every time your eyes and your mind tackle a page of print.

*But you must read!* And you must read the sort of books and magazines which will help your skill and mind grow, not stagnate.

Too many adults, once they have reached a certain level of maturity, have become so nonselective in their reading habits that they tend to fear any new type of reading experience. They are reluctant to read anything but detective stories, as if no other kind of book ever published could possibly interest them. Or they read only books in their professional or business field. Or only the latest novels. Or only inspirational or only religious books. Or only their one favorite newspaper every morning. Or only one magazine for which they have developed a liking.

It is the *only* which causes the trouble. You do not read for entertainment *only*, nor for information *only*. You read for continuous intellectual growth. Intellectual growth will not come from a rutted adherence to only one or two types of reading matter.

The editors of the *Saturday Review of Literature* wrote an editorial back in 1935, addressed to all the new graduates of the nation's colleges, which expresses so well the importance of wide reading and its influence on intellectual growth that I should like



to call it to your attention. In an earlier section I quoted one sentence from this editorial; here now is the piece in its entirety: <sup>3</sup>

### COMMENCEMENT, 1935

Ours is a versatile nation. A democracy in which education has from the beginning been the privilege of the masses, which began as a pioneering people the very condition of whose existence was an ability to meet the menacing and the unexpected with resourcefulness, and which in maturity has enjoyed so high a level of prosperity as to afford leisure for travel and sport to the many, is as a matter of course a nation of many aptitudes. Ingenuity has long been rated a Yankee virtue, and enterprise an American characteristic. The man in the street, even more than the scholar, feels himself competent to express an opinion on anything under the sun, and is rarely at a loss in a tight place for a suggestion. Large numbers of persons who have not even a bowing acquaintance with economics are quite ready to offer panaceas for the ills that beset the industrial world, and everybody is ready to take a hand in settling his neighbor's business. Let humanism become a fad of the moment, and a legion of serious-minded parlor philosophers who are blandly innocent of the humanism of the past will debate its issues, and when technocracy succeeds to it as an intellectual sensation, another legion will shake mournful heads over the sorry state of a mechanized world. Truly, knowledge has come down from the heights to the market place, but is it knowledge? Or is it merely interest compounded with daring and self-confidence?

At this moment, when the universities are again sending forth their eager thousands into a world distraught by gigantic problems, a fresh tide of energy is about to be let loose upon the country. The country, heaven knows, has need of all that it can get of vigor and idealism and ideas. But what it needs not at all is half-baked theorists and ill-buttressed opinions. It needs a youth full of generous enthusiasm and ranging curiosity, versatile in its interests but not overweening in its self-reliance, a youth that spurns, as is its prerogative, those mistakes of the past which the present has thrown into focus, but that has sufficient balance not to cry anathema on all that is because part of it is bad. It needs a youth that is versatile in the sense that it has aptitude for new tasks, but whose versatility smacks nothing of superficiality. It demands young men and young women who do not believe that education

<sup>3</sup> An editorial in the *Saturday Review of Literature*. Reprinted with permission.

ends with college, but who carry away from the university an abiding delight in books as the source of entertainment and invigoration and guidance.

For the man who reads well is the man who thinks well, who has a background for opinion and a touchstone for judgment. He may be a Lincoln who derives wisdom from a few books or a Roosevelt who ranges from Icelandic sagas to "Penrod." But reading makes him a full man, and out of his fullness he draws that example and precept which stand him in good stead when confronted with the problems which beset a chaotic universe. Mere reading, of course, is nothing. It is but the veneer of education. But wise reading is a help to action. American versatility is too frequently dilettantism, but reinforced by knowledge it becomes motive power. "Learning," as Mr. James L. Mursell, writing of it in a current periodical, remarks, "cashes the blank check of native versatility." And learning is a process not to be concluded with the formal teaching of college days or to be enriched only by the active experience of later years, but to be broadened and deepened by persistent and judicious reading. "The true University of these days is a Collection of Books," said Carlyle. If that is not the whole of the truth it is enough of it for every graduate to hug to his bosom.

If you have already read, or begun to read, the eight important books suggested in chapter IX, you have made a good and observable start toward becoming a well-rounded reader. How should you go on?

The key to the problem is to read books in fields which you hitherto have not explored; to read magazines of a type you haven't read before; to read, occasionally, a newspaper of a different political complexion from the one you read regularly. Have you ever read a book on anthropology? Try the new and excellent and readable *Mankind So Far*, by William Howells. Have you ever read a Russian novelist, or a German one, or a French one? Try Dostoevski for the Russian; Südermann or Hauptmann for the German; Flaubert for the French. Have you ever dug into a volume on semantics? Try *Language in Action*, by Hayakawa, or *English Words and Their Background*, by MacKnight. A book of humorous verse? Try *The Face Is Familiar*, by Ogden Nash.

I asked Bennett Cerf, Contributing Editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature* and president of Random House, Inc., what ten books he considered first rate for intellectual growth. Here is his list—you will notice that his initial recommendation also appears among the eight books which were discussed in chapter IX.

1. *Mathematics for the Million*, by Lancelot Hogben
2. *Science for the Citizen*, by Lancelot Hogben
3. *The Story of Philosophy*, by Will Durant
4. *Varieties of Religious Experience*, by William James
5. *The Education of Henry Adams*
6. *The Wisdom of China and India*, edited by Lin Yutang
7. *Capital*, by Karl Marx
8. *The Nature of the Physical World*, by Eddington
9. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, by Gibbon
10. *The Iliad and Odyssey*, by Homer

Then I asked twenty-six men and women whose opinions are helping to mold American thought to tell me about books which either had strongly influenced their thinking or which they had very thoroughly enjoyed and would especially recommend to an eager reader. Among these people are literary critics, influential editors, popular radio personalities, eminent writers and columnists, and important figures in public life. Just as they themselves represent a cross section of the articulate members of our generation, so also do their recommendations cover a cross section of significant books.

Here are their answers, in their own words:

*Eleanor Roosevelt*: "One of the books which I have read recently and thoroughly enjoyed is David Lilienthal's *TVA—Democracy on the March*. It is most interesting because it shows the pattern for development of a whole region."

*Ben Hibbs*, editor of the *Saturday Evening Post*: "I should like to recommend *The Editor and His People*, a collection of editorials by William Allen White, published in 1924 by The Macmillan Company. Granted that my own reading tastes in this case may be influenced by the fact that editorial writing is part of my job, I do think that Bill White's editorials make grand reading for anyone who likes the humorous and philosophical touch. Also, there is real meat in the book."

*Betty Smith*, author of *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*: "I would recommend *Winesburg, Ohio*, by Sherwood Anderson. I was much impressed by the writing—deeply moved by the poignant rhythm of life as lived in a small town. The characters were my kind

of people. The poetic simplicity of Anderson's style in his earlier books affected me deeply."

*Lester Markel*, Sunday Editor of *The New York Times*: "I select without hesitation *Darkness at Noon*. Arthur Koestler's book, it seems to me, provides the only real key I know to a full understanding of the totalitarian mind—and that is extremely important for these days."

*J. Donald Adams*, former editor of *The New York Times* Book Review: "I should be inclined to say that my reading as a youngster of *Emerson's Essays* carried over more into my subsequent life than any other book I can think of now."

*Westbrook Pegler*, famous newspaper columnist: "I was much impressed by Mark Twain's *Mysterious Stranger*."

*Alma Dettinger*, conductor of *Other People's Business* over Radio Station WQXR: "Among the current writers, let's include Betty Smith's *A Tree Grows in Brooklyn*; *The Collected Works of Mrs. Peter Willoughby*, by Mary Elizabeth Plummer; John P. Marquand's *H. M. Pulham, Esq.*; and *Citizen Tom Paine*, by Howard Fast; and punctuated here and there by Upton Sinclair's *Lanny Budd* series."

*Sumner Blossom*, editor of the *American Magazine*: "The Bible."

*Johannes Steel*, news commentator, noted author and columnist: "I have no hesitation in saying that one book I have enjoyed most in the past three years is Rebecca West's *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*. It appears to me to be a brilliant political and philosophical essay, which more than any other book published shows why the European continent had to come to and live through the ordeal that it is undergoing now."

*Lowell Thomas*, well-known radio commentator: "How about Colonel Bodley's new book, *Wind in the Sahara*? For some reason I was thinking of another volume this morning, one that I would like to reread: *The Shadow Show*, by J. H. Curle."

*Edward Weeks*, editor of the *Atlantic Monthly*: "A book I have much enjoyed is Catherine Drinker Bowen's vivid and warm-

hearted biography, *Yankee from Olympus*, a characteristic piece of Americana which is very bracing in these grim days. A book which seems to me of most immediate significance is Walter Lippmann's *U. S. War Aims*. Both of these volumes have appeared under the Atlantic imprint and I had my share of editing each."

*William L. Chenery*, well-known publisher: "If your readers' tastes are at all like mine, they will read with pleasure Catherine Drinker Bowen's life of Justice Holmes, his father, Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes, and his grandfather, the stalwart Congregationalist, all of which appear under the title of *Yankee from Olympus*. Justice Holmes was certainly a very great judge; Dr. Holmes was as characteristic of Boston as Bunker Hill; and the Reverend Abiel Holmes was a last expression of the eighteenth-century New England that did so much to create the United States. Out of the records and traditions and memories of these three men, their families, their friends and their contemporaries, Miss Bowen has composed a witty and penetrating study, wholly delightful to me and apparently to a very large audience."

*Adelaide Hawley*, women's commentator for the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer newsreel, *News of the Day*, and conductor of a daily radio program: "As for recently read books that I have liked, take your choice: C. S. Lewis's *The Screwtape Letters* and *Out of the Silent Planet*; *The Great Answer*, by Margaret Lee Runbeck; *The Crisis of Our Age*, by Pitirim Sorokin; and Noel Busch's *My Unconsidered Judgment*. It seems from this list (with the exception of Busch) that the books I read from choice are at least semi-inspirational. I like a book if it stimulates me to fresh thinking—sets me off on flights of fancy—makes my scalp prickle with the feeling that there—right there on that page—between the lines is something 'out of this world' in the non-slang sense—something to let me in on the cosmic secret if only I can manage to comprehend. Emerson is a constant companion because he so often gives me that feeling."

*Douglas E. Lurton*, editor of *Your Life* magazine, former managing editor of the *Literary Digest*: "Let me nominate *The Marks of an Educated Man*, by my wise and distinguished friend, Albert Edward Wiggam, because its deeply human counsel clears away the cobwebs of formal 'education' and makes knowledge

usable. It is a book that stimulates and assists its readers to the attainment of a more desirable way of life."

*Leonard Lyons*, nationally known conductor of *The Lyons Den*: "Make what you wish of it, but the book that has influenced me most was *The Dissenting Opinions of Mr. Justice Holmes*."

*Bruce Gould*, editor of the *Ladies' Home Journal*: "*Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare. I've read that more often, I believe, than any other single book, and seen it played more often than any other play. I'm still not altogether sure that I understand it thoroughly."

*Henry Seidel Canby*, editor of the *Saturday Review of Literature*: "I should say the English Bible, though *one* book never stands alone."

*Quincy Howe*, noted news analyst: "The Bible, of course."

*Pegeen Fitzgerald*, inimitable radio columnist on the Mutual Network: "*Remember the Day*, by Kenneth Horan, is a source of unfailing pleasure to me. I keep it for bed-side reading (along with *The Good Soldier Schweik*) and it makes me so lonesome for my own family and for the days when we were young that I'm not lonely!"

*Mary Margaret McBride*, radio columnist and author, conductor of one of the most influential women's programs on the air: "Off-hand, I choose *Green Mansions*, by W. H. Hudson, the most beautiful love story I've ever read and the best escape reading that I know."

*Wilfred Funk*, noted lexicographer, and for sixteen years president of Funk and Wagnalls: "Two or three years ago I had the privilege of reading a book called *Straight Thinking*, by William J. Reilly, that electrified me. It is a simple, clear, nonliterary book slanted almost entirely for the business man, yet to me it seemed so important that I gave a copy to each of my children. This volume teaches the art of precise observation. It shows how to define a problem, how to secure evidence bearing on the problem, how to draw intelligent and accurate conclusions. The book

revealed to me the fact that there are very few among us who know the first principles of how to think."

*Lawrence E. Spivak*, publisher: "I am afraid I have become a bit callous about books, having had to read so many in a professional capacity. As I think back, it doesn't seem to me that I was ever so excited about any book as I was at the age of thirteen over Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*. After an early reading life of Horatio Alger, Fred Fearnott, Frank and Dick Merriwell, and Henty, Dickens' 'blood and thunder' story made an indelible impression. Although I have forgotten a great deal of what I read in my early youth, I don't believe I ever can forget *A Tale of Two Cities*."

*Geraldine E. Rhoads*, editor of *Today's Woman*: "When I read books I am inclined to choose ones which distill a writer's whole personal experience, or personal knowledge of a subject. In this one respect, books are generally more rewarding reading than other shorter fiction or nonfiction. This partly explains my liking for three books: *The Lost Weekend*, by Charles Jackson; *Good Night, Sweet Prince*, by Gene Fowler; and *Strange Fruit*, by Lillian Smith, even though I quarrel with some parts of them. Of the three, the most spectacular for me was *The Lost Weekend*, because it was so simply and tightly written. I tell you this very humbly because I could never for a minute be considered an expert in the book field, and my book reading is awfully catch-as-catch-can."

*Boris Todrin*, noted poet and novelist: "I would be very willing to recommend to your readers the following book: *The Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson*. This is our greatest American poet. He combines original innovations with traditional forms to give us something new and rich and strange. His material is always rooted in the human being. Wherever 'nature' appears in his work, it is never 'nature' *per se* and for its own sake. Like Thomas Hardy, his world has a direct impact on people. Robinson is always building a musical structure along with his narrative or lyric. There is a strong element of song which should catch the unbiased reader and take him along. In general, poetry, which at its finest contains the best elements of rhythm, music, and prose, should appeal to more people because it is compact and imme-

diate. With lyrics you experience in a short span the emotion generated by a full-length novel."

*Arthur M. Godfrey*, popular radio personality: "I should like most heartily to recommend *Naval Customs, Traditions and Usage*, by Captain Leland P. Lovette, U.S.N., published by the United States Naval Institute at Annapolis, Maryland—third edition, May 1939. Even the most confirmed landlubber will find this contribution to the literature of our glorious navy fascinating, informative, and entertaining. It is a 'must' in the library of every naval officer and, in my opinion, the use of this book as a text for study in the history class rooms of the high schools of America would foster such national love and understanding of the naval service and such universal appreciation of the importance of a permanently sound, healthy naval policy as to keep the United States forever the greatest naval power in the world."

*Martin Block*, famous originator of "The Make-Believe Ballroom" on WNEW: "In answer to your letter regarding the book I have particularly enjoyed, there is one unique, extraordinary book I cannot do without; it is both a working utensil and an absorbing intellectual pleasure. Since childhood, I have spent untold hours reading the pages of my dictionary, seeking new and wonderful words. I journey through my dictionary both at home and in the broadcasting studio. I never have enough of Webster's New International Dictionary with its illuminating definitions, its illustrations, its maps and other useful appendices. Withal, it is an exhilarating excursion into the English language. Anatole France aptly put it when he wrote in his *Life and Letters* that 'a dictionary is the book above all books. All the other books are in it: it is only a matter of taking them out. And, too, what was Adam's first occupation when he left God's hands? Genesis tells us he first names the animals by their names. Adam is no less the father of lexicography than of humanity.' It is my role to deal with words, to use them effectively on the air. I do it with the dictionary—the treasure house of the English language. Somewhere it has been said that 'the way we can tell whether we really like a book is, do we find ourself writing our name in it.' This I did on the flyleaf of my dictionary."

The books suggested by these twenty-six people might provide the second lap of your journey down untrodden paths.



From there on, you're on your own. Browse through your public library, exploring the hidden nooks where few people go, and the locked cases; wander among the shelves of your favorite bookstore. Scan the book columns of your newspaper, leaning a little on the advice of the reviewers in your Sunday book review section or in *Saturday Review of Literature*.<sup>4</sup> Or you might write to the Modern Library, Inc., at 457 Madison Ave., New York 22, N.Y., asking for the complete catalogue of classics and near-classics of world literature at \$1.25 each. The Modern Library editions offer at a budget price a treasury of exciting reading, an adventure in book buying.

Above all, do not be content with reading the same kind of book or the same magazine and newspaper over and over and over again. Wander afield; there are undreamed of discoveries to be made.

If you have been a little less than satisfied with the novels you have been reading lately, you might try some of these, each of which is an experience in itself:

*Success*, by Lion Feuchtwanger

*Of Human Bondage*, by W. Somerset Maugham

*Crime and Punishment*, by Feodor Dostoevski

*South Wind*, by Norman Douglas

*The Store*, by T. S. Stribling

*Captain Horatio Hornblower*, by C. S. Forester

*Hold Autumn in Your Hand*, by George Sessions Perry

*Hunger*, by Knut Hamsun

*Giants in the Earth*, by O. E. Rølvaag

*Arrival and Departure*, by Arthur Koestler

*So Little Time*, by John P. Marquand

### *Review Test*

#### *What Have You Learned About Reading?*

*Take this true-false test:*

1. Skill in reading and skill in thinking go together.

TRUE? FALSE?

<sup>4</sup> Published at 25 West 45th Street, New York 19, N.Y. Subscription price, \$6.00 a year.

2. Active thinking means fully understanding what an author is saying. TRUE? FALSE?
3. Passive thinking means failing to understand what an author is saying. TRUE? FALSE?
4. If a man can get his ideas into print, those ideas must be correct and therefore should be believed. TRUE? FALSE?
5. In other words, there is no point in a reader agreeing or disagreeing with an author. TRUE? FALSE?
6. A deep and difficult book can force you to think to the maximum of your thinking powers. TRUE? FALSE?
7. A steady diet of frivolous and poorly written books can decrease reading skill. TRUE? FALSE?
8. A good reader always draws the "right" conclusions. TRUE? FALSE?
9. A passive reader never draws any conclusions from his reading. TRUE? FALSE?
10. To learn how to draw conclusions, you must master certain "tricks of thinking." TRUE? FALSE?
11. Active thinking somewhat slows down the reading rate. TRUE? FALSE?
12. Occasionally expressing your thoughts in writing will sharpen your thinking powers. TRUE? FALSE?
13. Every kind of art has a "message." TRUE? FALSE?
14. Daily reading of newspaper editorials will help sharpen the faculty of alert skepticism. TRUE? FALSE?
15. It is a valuable mental exercise to read editorials in newspapers of different political leanings. TRUE? FALSE?
16. To become a well-rounded reader, explore unknown fields, read many different kinds of books, magazines, newspapers. TRUE? FALSE?

To check your answers, reverse the book.

Key: 1-T, 2-F, 3-F, 4-F, 5-F, 6-T, 7-T, 8-F, 9-T, 10-F, 11-F, 12-T, 13-T, 14-T, 15-T, 16-T.

## CHAPTER XI

# Final Training in Rapid Comprehension

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### *Preview*

#### *You will learn:*

- What results you may reasonably expect from your training up to this point.
- Whether you have been organizing your training along the lines suggested.
- How your speed on longer and somewhat more difficult selections compares with the rate you've achieved in previous training sessions.

CHAPTER XI IS YOUR LAST LAP. WITH WEEKS OR MONTHS OF CAREFULLY ORGANIZED TRAINING BEHIND YOU, YOU WILL NOW BEGIN TO REAP THE REWARDS OF YOUR HARD LABOR.

## 1. What You Have Accomplished

As you approach this final training period in rapid comprehension, let us catalogue the training you have had and the results that such training has aimed to produce in your reading habits.

TRAINING	EXPECTED RESULTS
1. Decrease in regression tendencies.	1. Greater faith in your ability to comprehend. Less dependence on minor points, individual words, unimportant phrases.
2. Decrease in vocalization tendencies.	2. Increase in speed of comprehension since the eye and the mind no longer have to wait for word articulation.
3. Conquest of lip movements and other motor responses.	3. Radical increase in speed—the lip mover reads at 120 to 150 words per minute, no matter how good his comprehension may be. Increase in ability to concentrate since there is less tendency for mind wandering while waiting for lip formation of syllables and words to catch up with the speed of thinking.

4. Increase of perception span through digit exercises.	4. Decrease in number of fixations per line of print; optimum conditions for reduction of inner speech and other auditory responses.
5. Increase of span of recognition and rapidity of fixations through phrase-perception exercises.	5. Decrease in need to regress; optimum circumstances for reduction of inner speech; increase in reading speed; decrease in number of fixations per line of print.
6. Rapid comprehension training.	6. Less dependence on details and minor points; development of habit of rapid absorption; ability to skim without guilt over unimportant words, phrases, ideas; better understanding of the main ideas in a reading selection; slow but permanent increase in comfortable speed of reading.
7. Vocabulary training.	7. Quicker understanding of meanings of words; less need to regress to words incompletely understood; general comprehension gain; reduction of the habit of making numerous fixations on unfamiliar words.
8. Habit of reading a light novel or complete magazine at one sitting.	8. Better concentration; increased speed of comprehension; willingness to skim without guilt or uncertainty; more self-confidence in reacting to ideas.

TRAINING	EXPECTED RESULTS
9. Reading difficult books.	9. Building of background for later reading; building of general comprehension; loss of fear of "hard" books or of difficult material.
10. Thinking actively and responding critically.	10. Better concentration; keener comprehension; more pleasure in reading.

I have taken for granted, as you no doubt realize, that before you have reached this point in the book (and in your training), you have disciplined yourself to practice methodically, and nearly every day, on one or more of the following aspects of your training:

1. Six to nine minutes of drill on a combination of digit- and phrase-perception exercises.

2. Conquest of a light novel or issue of a magazine in one sitting.

3. Rapid comprehension of material by finding the main ideas quickly, either in the rapid comprehension exercises in the book or, when these gave out, in magazine articles or book chapters (nonfiction.)

4. The learning of a certain number of new words either from the five hundred important words in the book, from some of the vocabulary manuals suggested, or from your general reading.

5. Practice in reading difficult material in one of the eight books suggested, or in some other books of comparable difficulty.

If you have worked systematically, faithfully, and intelligently at your training, it is now anywhere from one to six months since you started your work with this book. And you have begun to reap the harvest of your hard work; you have reached the point where you can clip the coupons and count your dividends; to be less poetic, you have begun to sense a definite increase in your reading speed and efficiency.

And if all this is true, or even partly true, you have every right to feel proud of your accomplishment, proud of whatever degree of success you have attained. You have done it all yourself; you have trained yourself to reach closer to your ultimate potential

efficiency as a reader. Through your own efforts, without any magic pills, you have become a better and faster reader.

Brother (or sister, if such be the case), that is no mean accomplishment!

## 2. The Last Lap

Now you will have your last chance (in this book, but of course not in your outside reading) to measure the speed of your comprehension. The selections in this chapter will be somewhat longer and more difficult, for the most part, than those in your previous training sessions. If you can maintain the rate, more or less, that you averaged in the selections in chapter V, you can feel that this rate is becoming set, reflexive, habitual. Perhaps you may even exceed that previously established rate. But since the material will be of greater length in many cases and of greater complexity, consider it progress if your rate remains the same, or even if it drops a little.

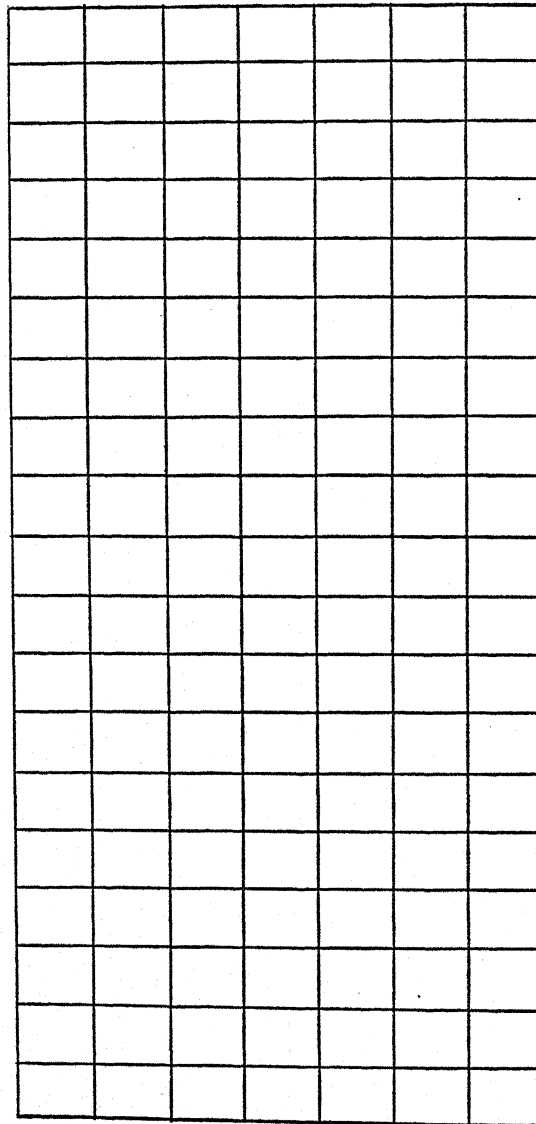
Remember that you are not trying to "read fast"; if you were, you would have to keep reminding yourself, in a long selection, to keep speeding up. What you are aiming for is a quick grasp of the main idea, the central thought, the gist of each selection. There is, of course, no valid reason why you can't be just as happy if you get the central idea less quickly, and, as I have so often admitted before, there are times when you will prefer to reduce your rate, in accordance with the nature of the material and with what you want to get out of it. But, again to repeat, you are developing the *power* to read fast so that you can draw on that power as a sort of reserve when the material or your purpose or outside necessity requires such speed and efficiency. (And incidentally, though you will always vary your speed to suit the varying circumstances of material and necessity, you will never again, if your training has had any success, be as slow as you were originally. Your purposely slow speed, though considerably less than your maximum cruising rate, will still be substantially higher than your original natural speed, substantially higher than the average rate of the untrained, inefficient reader.)

Again, as in your preceding training sessions in rapid comprehension, keep a careful record of your progress on the graph, first plotting your original rate (as determined from page 13) in a straight line parallel to AB.

# PROGRESS GRAPH III

W.P.M.

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A

22

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B

SELECTION NUMBER



### 3. Rapid Comprehension Exercises

We'll warm up with a relatively short and easy selection. Skim if you like, or read completely, but drive for the main idea.

#### *Rapid Comprehension Exercise 22*

##### ON A MAGAZINE COVER <sup>1</sup>

by Bennett Cerf

**Start timing**→Have you ever entertained the notion that editing a magazine would be just your dish? If so, this little piece is intended to give you pause. No job in the world offers a surer and quicker promise of a first-class case of stomach ulcers, and if you don't believe me, you have only to take a canvass of all the dyspeptic specimens now extant.

Finding new writers and artists, and then holding onto them, avoiding libel and plagiarism suits, fighting the inroads of eager beavers in the advertising department, and getting copy to the printer on time for every issue are only part of their problem. They must also live under the perpetual fear that something is going to happen while a number is on press or about to hit the stands that will make one of their leading articles—perhaps the one featured on the cover—look ridiculous.

Especially vulnerable, of course, are the news magazines—not to mention the motion picture “fan” periodicals, which often come out with rapturous descriptions of the idyllic home life of two famous Hollywood love-birds a day or so after said love-birds have hit the front page with a super-colossal free-for-all in a night club, and marched off to the divorce courts.

The day after the Jap raid on Pearl Harbor, one of our best-known magazines appeared with a lead article designed to prove that Hawaii never could be attacked successfully. And just when our unprepared and pitifully inadequate forces were being knocked silly by Japanese aviators, another periodical was featuring a piece of an “expert” who proved conclusively that the Japs were worthless as air fighters because their planes were antiquated

<sup>1</sup> From *Shake Well Before Using*, Simon and Schuster, New York. Reprinted with permission.

puddle-jumpers, their pilots were cock-eyed, and their bombs were duds.

Some years ago, an enterprising editor bagged a piece by a noted octogenarian which gave in details his secrets of longevity. Unfortunately, the day before the article appeared the octogenarian dropped dead. Another editor lined up eight pages of colored photographs of the accession to the throne of King Edward VIII, and a description of same by the highest-paid journalist in Britain. The editor was correcting proofs when his wife called out, "Hurry up if you want to hear Edward abdicate over the radio."

In August, 1914, a magazine featured an article about the Kaiser, calling it "The World's Greatest Peace Advocate." When it appeared, German soldiers were already tramping through the towns of Belgium. In October, 1929, a big financial digest devoted most of an issue to a widely bullish interpretation of the market. It reached the stands during the greatest Wall Street crash in history. In April, 1947, another periodical printed Leo Durocher's picture on its cover, and hailed him as one of baseball's indispensables. Manager Durocher, unfortunately, had just been suspended from his job as manager of the Brooklyn Dodgers for the entire season. These were in no sense "boners" on the part of the editors involved; they simply were tough breaks; and there are dozens more like them on the records.

The great newspaper cartoonist, Jay Darling ("Ding"), made a drawing in 1935 labeled "The Fates Are Funny That Way," depicting a whole series of national calamities; earthquakes, floods, and train wrecks—but in the concluding panel he showed Mr. Public complaining to his wife, "Yet nothing ever seems to happen to Huey Long!" Three days later, Long was assassinated. One Western paper, in fact, received Ding's cartoon a bit late, and ran it and the story of Long's death in adjoining columns.

During the war, edition after edition of the big news weeklies had to be ripped apart at the last moment because of some sudden and spectacular happening. Even now, the editors of these weeklies spend the twenty-four hours before press time praying that nothing will occur to necessitate a complete reshuffling of an issue's contents. Their wives see them, if at all, by television. One of them hasn't spent a week-end away from his office since he came down with pneumonia trying to catch pictures of a fight between a flounder and a soft shell crab.

Do you still yearn to be a magazine editor? Or maybe you'd like to try your hand as a circulation manager! Listen to the sad tale of one of them.

At enormous expense, he installed a complicated machine that isolated all the index plates of patrons whose subscriptions were going to run out in five or six weeks. It automatically printed their names and addresses at the tops of one of those irresistible form letters that begin "Surely you are not going to allow yourself to miss a single issue, etc., etc.," sealed and stamped the envelopes, and dropped them in a chute without human hands even so much as touching them. The circulation manager was so proud of this machine that he wrote a long article about it and hailed the company that built it as a benefactor of humanity.

Unfortunately, the machine went out of kilter one day this summer, and before the slip-up was discovered, a baffled rancher in Montana received 11,834 letters telling him his subscription was about to expire. The local postmaster had to hire a special truck to deliver them all. When the ranger succeeded in digging himself out from under, he wrote to the magazine, "I give up! A check for five dollars, renewing my subscription, is enclosed herewith."

With or without their editors, the magazines march on!

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. Magazine editors are a rather scatter-brained lot.
2. Magazine editors have special and peculiar problems (largely in relation to "timing") that make their lives particularly trying.
3. A magazine editor's problems are harder than those of a circulation manager.
4. Despite the editors, magazines still manage to survive.
5. Don't become an editor.

*Key:* Subtract seven from eight, add one.

## TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
1 min.	830	2 min., 30 sec.	332
1 min., 15 sec.	684	2 min., 45 sec.	304
1 min., 30 sec.	554	3 min.	277
1 min., 45 sec.	476	3 min., 30 sec.	238
2 min.	415	4 min.	208
2 min., 15 sec.	368		

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.  
Plot this rate on your progress graph.

### *Rapid Comprehension Exercise 23*

#### “NATURAL CHILDBIRTH”: A PROGRESS REPORT <sup>2</sup>

by Dorothy Barclay

**Start timing**→In 1944 Dr. Grantly Dick Read's "Childbirth Without Fear" was published in the United States. His thesis, based on thirty-five years of experimentation in London, was that child bearing is a normal, natural function which should be painless when mothers understand its processes and are freed from the tension due to deeply implanted fear. Three years later Dr. Read came to this country for meetings with professional groups and reports of his methods touched off a controversy that still goes on.

The articles that have been written on the Read method, the discussions it has inspired at medical meetings—and over back fences—reaffirmed the importance of the mother in childbirth. For too many years, adherents felt, she had been looked on, paradoxically, as a sort of necessary evil in the delivery room. A woman who had to have things done to her instead of a woman who was doing something wonderful.

The general discussion gave many women a new feeling about having children and changed many of their ways of thinking. But erroneous ideas about childbirth had started with the first baby, and the old wives' tales were replaced by some new ones. It was said that the Read method guaranteed a painless delivery, that drugs were never used, that the mere doing of a series of exercises during pregnancy assured a natural birth.

<sup>2</sup> From *The New York Times Magazine*. Reprinted with permission.

Now mothers—and fathers and doctors and nurses—may benefit from a scientific report on the work done over the past three years at the Grace-New Haven Community Hospital, the principal center in this country for the practice of the Read principles. The report covers the experiences of 1,100 women and was prepared by Dr. Herbert Thoms and Dr. Robert H. Wyatt of the Yale University School of Medicine. It was presented last week in New York at a meeting sponsored by the Child Study Association.

In addition, the people working with the method at the Maternity Center Association here have some pertinent observations, and some first-hand reactions of mothers who have had their babies this way, others who want to and some forward-looking young ladies who aren't even married yet.

The Yale doctors made two points clear.

This is not, in every case, painless childbirth and pain is recognized exactly for what it is. Of 400 women who had their babies during the first two years the plan was in operation in New Haven, only 2 per cent found the proceedings completely painless.

Drugs are not withheld. Anesthetics and analgesic agents in small doses are given when the patient asks for them. Seventy-five per cent do ask for—and get—something to take the edge off the pain.

Well, then, what *is* meant by natural childbirth and what must be done to achieve it? ("My husband keeps kidding me about wanting to have a baby this new way," a young wife said. "He calls it the 'drive-it-yourself' system.")

As Hazel Corbin, director of the Maternity Center Association, explains it, the mother is—or should be—the most important person involved in a delivery. When any woman has her baby naturally, she explains, she cooperates with the forces at work within her body and does the job by her own efforts, with or without assistance to help her along.

How? First of all, the mother has to be in the best health. She and her husband need a thorough understanding of how babies develop and are born. The mother must have physical preparation. She must learn to relax at will and to keep herself relaxed as long as necessary. By a series of exercises she must increase the elasticity and improve the tone of the muscles she will use during labor. And, finally, she needs support and encouragement during labor—which means somebody with her, who knows more than she does, to direct her efforts.

That last item is essential to the proper working of the whole plan. Even the best prepared athlete, Miss Corbin points out, needs coaching when the game is on. Separated from family and friends, in new and sometimes upsetting surroundings, any woman is liable to get confused and forget what to do.

At a time when lots of doctors think of actual delivery as an almost surgical procedure, the Yale doctors reported only 90 of 1,100 mothers who attempted natural childbirth at Grace-New Haven required "operative intervention." And at a time when millions of women think the test of a good delivery is not to remember a thing, 948 of the 1,010 who delivered spontaneously were fully conscious at the moment their babies were born. Many were thrilled and delighted enough about the experience to ask—even before they left the delivery room—how soon they might have another child.

Still and all, nobody is claiming that childbirth is a champagne picnic. During the long hours of hard work that come before the trip to the delivery room, women need companionship, too, and here is where one of the newest ideas comes in. As the plan works in New Haven, the husband's presence is actually encouraged in the labor room.

Carol Janeway, who directs the preparatory classes for mothers (and fathers) at the Maternity Center Association, explained one of the reasons why. Having her back massaged during contractions, she told us, is one of those simple but vital things that help a mother over the bad spots. "And husbands are the best back-rubbers in the world, bar none." By instinct, apparently, they know when their wives want a glass of water, the psychological moment to wash their faces or smooth their hair.

"They don't allow husbands in the labor room where my wife will be," a young father-to-be complained. "That is a shocking thing." Too bad, Miss Janeway agrees, but most hospitals just aren't geared yet for such proceedings.

Objections have been raised in the medical profession that the whole procedure is impractical because of the time that physicians and nurses must devote to it. The advocates have an answer. Instruction classes during the preparation period can be conducted by specially trained nurses, they point out. As for the added attention during labor, they hold that patients in active labor should not be left alone under any system and point again to the help that nurses, and husbands, can give.

True enough, Miss Corbin told us, not everybody can achieve a natural birth. "This is for women who set out to do things and see them through." For them, she claimed, the chances of achieving a natural and practically painless birth are greater than any current statistical charts can show.

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main ideas. This piece contains a number of important points. Below you will find thirteen statements, only five of which are of any importance. The others are either minor details or inaccurate references to sections of the material. Can you check five *and only five* important points?

1. Under the Read system women can have more babies than under other systems.
2. The mother is a kind of "necessary evil" in the delivery room.
3. The Read method is not absolutely painless in every case.
4. Anesthetics and analgesics in small doses are given when the mother asks for them.
5. This report covers the experiences of 110 women.
6. The former old wives tales about childbirth have been replaced by new ones.
7. In the Read method, the mother cooperates during delivery.
8. For the Read method to work, the mother must be in the best of health, must learn to relax at will, and should have support and encouragement during labor.
9. Most doctors think of delivery as a surgical procedure.
10. No "operative intervention" is permitted under the Read method.
11. Women delivering by the Read method remember nothing of their experiences.
12. The husband's presence is encouraged in the labor room.
13. Very few women can achieve a natural delivery.

*Key:* Correct answers are three, four, seven, eight, and twelve.

## TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
1 min., 30 sec.	800	3 min., 30 sec.	344
2 min.	600	4 min.	300
2 min., 30 sec.	480	4 min., 30 sec.	267
3 min.	400	5 min.	240

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

Plot this rate on your progress graph.

### *Rapid Comprehension Exercise 24*

IS TRAFFIC-COURT JUSTICE BLIND?<sup>3</sup>

by Albert Q. Maisel

**Start timing**→It was 2 a.m. on a hot August night. In a San Francisco suburb, a man lurched out of a bar and into his car, and roared northward at 80 miles an hour.

Before police could stop the drink-crazed driver he had crashed into another car and sent six persons to the hospital. At the police station he was examined by a doctor who confirmed, by chemical test, what everyone already knew. Six people had been maimed because a madman, too drunk even to walk, had gotten behind the wheel.

Is that driver now in jail? Hardly. Police charged the man with felony drunken driving (which carries a penitentiary penalty in California), reckless driving and driving on the wrong side of the highway. When he was taken to court, the felony charge was dismissed. The injured were there, ready to testify, but they weren't even called to the stand. The two lesser charges brought a fine of only \$200 and a slap-on-the-wrist license suspension of 90 days.

Move up the coast now to Portland, Ore., where a motorized maniac was brought into court after killing his victim and running from the scene. Did he end in the penitentiary? Not at all. A charge of negligent homicide was substituted for the original indictment and the killer, after paying a \$75 fine, walked out of court a free man.

<sup>3</sup> From *Reader's Digest*. Reprinted with permission of the author and of *Reader's Digest*.



These cases are not exceptional. New York City's magistrates last year discharged nearly two-thirds of all the defendants who were tried before them for drunken driving. Of those they convicted, 91 percent were let off with either a suspended sentence or a small fine. Not a single one of the five—that's right, only five—who received jail sentences served more than 30 days.

Records such as these go a long way toward explaining why we still kill some 32,000 people on our highway every year and maim 1,100,000 others. In most cities, serious offenses are all too easily written off the books in a flood of continuances, dismissals, and ridiculously small fines.

But there is another shocking side to the traffic-court picture. In city after city, police and the courts have ganged up on the least dangerous of motor-law offenders—the harried salesman and the busy housewife who violate parking ordinances. These motorists, guilty of little more than trying to go about their business, are being pursued with single-minded efficiency. Police are taken off their motorcycles and squad cars to spend their days ticketing parked cars.

How far this has gone is demonstrated by St. Paul, Minn. In 1940 that city had 31,747 traffic cases. Last year the load on its courts had almost doubled: 63,266 cases. The entire increase is accounted for by the drive against parkers. Overtime parking cases rose from less than 22,000 in 1940 to nearly 55,000 last year.

In Detroit, between 1940 and 1948, police complaints against parkers increased 65 percent while complaints against nonparking violators increased less than two percent.

In Syracuse, N. Y., convictions for moving violations increased less than ten percent between 1936 and 1948 while convictions for parking violators increased more than 450 percent.

Behind this urge to penalize parking lies the discovery by many tax-hungry municipal officials that there is a gold mine in parking-law enforcement. Cleveland's income from traffic fines last year was six times as great as in 1940. In Charleston, S. C., Salt Lake City, Utah, and Kalamazoo, Mich., traffic-fine revenues have jumped more than 400 percent. In Los Angeles, traffic fines and forfeitures pay the cost of operating all municipal courts and yield the city a profit of \$3,200,000 besides.

Throughout the country, the campaign to soak the parker has more than doubled the already overwhelming burden of traffic cases that have clogged our court machinery for years. Judges

are so busy mechanically repeating the routine of "Five dollars and costs" in trivial cases that they have no time to deal properly with serious violators.

As the number of trivial traffic cases has grown, city after city has resorted to a new device—the cash-register or cafeteria court. More than 70 percent of all traffic tickets served by the police are now answerable in such Violations Bureaus. All the overtime parker has to do is to plead guilty—whether guilty or not—swallow his perhaps valid mitigating explanations and answer "Yes" to the clerk's refrain of "Yawanna pay?"

True, the ticketed citizen still has the right to demand his day in court. But when he tries to exercise that right, he finds numerous pressures exerted to induce a guilty plea. I have sat in 40 courtrooms during the last six months watching this parody of justice. Typical was the performance I witnessed in a New York court last summer.

The judge arrived more than an hour late while nearly 200 accused motorists sweated and fumed. First he had his clerk call up all who were ready to plead guilty. Anyone offering a not-guilty plea or an explanation was gruffly ordered back to his seat. One woman approached the bench with a baby in her arms, to ask for special consideration. The magistrate cut her short with "Lady, if you hadn't done wrong you wouldn't be here. Now get back to your seat and take your turn like everyone else."

The vast majority of the "guilty" were overtime parkers or those caught parking in restricted areas. Without discernible rhyme or reason they drew fines of from four to ten dollars.

Next—an hour later—came the "guilty with an explanation" group. Many were speeders. If their stories were glib, they got off with fines which were sometimes less than those of the parkers who had pleaded guilty before them.

Those who pleaded not guilty had to wait till noon before they were even called before the bench. Then the vast majority were held over for a trial at a later date. Confronted with further loss of time from work, many offered to change their pleas to guilty.

Small wonder that the attitude of the average motorist tagged with a parking ticket is one of utter cynicism. As my neighbor in court, a burly truck driver, put it: "Don't be a dope. Plead guilty and get it over with."

Drives against the parker do not contribute to traffic safety; often they work against it. For the last year and a half, New York City's

police have been conducting a savage drive against parkers. Last year they ticketed 83,806 more parking-ordinance violators than the year before. But to accomplish this prodigy of law enforcement they had to let up elsewhere. They caught 8,270 fewer speeders, 6,807 fewer drivers who ran through red lights.

As a result, New York—which has always been below the national average in street safety—has fallen into last place among the largest cities of the country. Accidents, injuries, and deaths have all increased in 1949 over the previous year.

Chicago has had a different experience. Long at the bottom of the heap in traffic safety, Chicago finally called upon the Northwestern University Traffic Institute and the International Association of Chiefs of Police for a plan to cure its difficulties. Studies made early in 1948 showed that 80 percent of all traffic tickets being issued in Chicago were for nonmoving violations. In the month of February, only three speeding tickets were issued.

A new policy of selective enforcement was developed. Men were called away from the fruitless job of tagging parked cars. The number of motorcycle policemen was trebled and 54 special traffic-control autos were added. Police were instructed to give priority to violations connected with traffic accidents. Reckless and drunken driving were placed at the top of the enforcement list.

The pay-off has been dramatic. In the year ending June 30, 1948 (the year before the reform), Chicago had 529 traffic deaths. In the year since, traffic deaths dropped to 435. Ninety-four lives were saved and thousands of injuries avoided.

But Chicago knows this is only the first step. The process of driving shoppers and businessmen out of town by the parking-ticket route has been halted. Now the city is planning to invite more cars than ever before to park in its busiest districts—not on the streets but in municipally owned lots and garages. Nearly 30,000 parking meters are to be installed in the Loop and on outlying arteries. The revenue from these meters will finance new off-street parking spaces.

Outstanding in this respect has been the achievement of White Plains, N. Y., a large shopping center, which set up the first Parking Authority in the United States in 1947. Instead of chasing parkers away with punitive fines, the city put meters on its main streets and dedicated their revenue to the improvement of parking facilities. Meter revenues have soared and the money is used by the Parking Authority.

San Francisco, with one large underground municipal garage already paying for itself, is planning \$19,000,000 worth of new projects to house 15,000 cars. Pittsburgh has set up a Parking Authority and is issuing \$34,000,000 in bonds to be liquidated by the income from 32 big public lots and garages. Denver has a \$4,500,000 program under way.

These plans are impressive. Yet, there are still far too many cities which still think of parking as merely a matter for police action. Until these cities wake up, our traffic courts will continue to be swamped with petty violators and real law enforcement for safety will continue to be sacrificed.

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. Parking meters are the best and simplest method of solving traffic problems.
2. Traffic courts are generally abusive and discourteous to the motoring public—and the traffic court setup is the chief cause of present-day traffic problems.
3. Traffic accidents will decrease when our cities concentrate on enforcing the law against serious traffic offenses, rather than on detecting parking violations.
4. Because our traffic courts are inefficient, perpetrators of serious traffic violations usually escape with light and inadequate punishment.
5. Experience proves that whether you are guilty or innocent, you can save time and trouble in traffic courts if you plead guilty.

*Key:* Subtract five from seven and add one to determine the number of the correct answer.

### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
2 min.	800	3 min.	533
2 min., 15 sec.	692	3 min., 15 sec.	492
2 min., 30 sec.	640	3 min., 30 sec.	457
2 min., 45 sec.	580	3 min., 45 sec.	428

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
4 min.	400	5 min., 30 sec.	292
4 min., 15 sec.	376	5 min., 45 sec.	278
4 min., 30 sec.	356	6 min.	267
4 min., 45 sec.	336	6 min., 30 sec.	247
5 min.	320	7 min.	229
5 min., 15 sec.	306	8 min.	200

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.  
Plot this rate on your progress graph.

## *Rapid Comprehension Exercise 25*

### "CURES" FOR THE COMMON COLD <sup>4</sup>

by Harold S. Diehl, M.D.

#### I

**Start timing**→Despite general skepticism about cures for the common cold, millions of dollars' worth of commercial remedies are still sold in this country every year. Old-fashioned cures like asafetida and camphor are no longer in vogue, but in their place has come a whole new arsenal of popular remedies—vitamins, vaccines, nasal medications and other drugs. Yet careful investigation shows that many of the most widely advertised remedies now on the market are utterly worthless. Some of them, in fact, may be definitely harmful.

In an effort to discover an effective cold remedy, a series of investigations was begun ten years ago at the University of Minnesota. The studies grew out of a chance observation which had led me to believe that morphine might be of value in relieving acute head colds. Extensive tests corroborated this observation; but morphine, because of its toxicity and the danger of habituation to it, was obviously unsuited for general use. The scope of the investigation was consequently broadened in the hope of finding a remedy that would be equally effective but less harmful. In this way, many of the most widely used cold preparations came under close study.

The investigations were carried out by the Students' Health

<sup>4</sup> From *The American Mercury*. Reprinted with permission of the author and publisher.

Service of the University. Each study was specifically planned to avoid prejudice for or against any particular medication. Physicians wrote prescriptions merely for "cold medication." The pharmacist filling them used in sequence the medications being studied at the time. Neither physician nor patient knew what medication had been given. After forty-eight hours of treatment, the patients reported the results on cards prepared for this purpose. Upon the basis of these reports the effectiveness of the medication in each case was estimated. Finally, the pharmacist's record was obtained and the results tabulated according to the various medications used.

In each of these studies some of the tablets and capsules given out contained only milk sugar. These were included so that we might know what proportion of patients would recover without treatment in the forty-eight-hour period for which results were reported. In other words, the group who received sugar tablets, thinking that they contained medication, served as a "control group" for the rest of the study.

The importance of having this control was clearly shown in the very first investigations. Approximately 35 per cent of the students who got the sugar tablets reported "definite improvement" or "complete cure" of their colds within forty-eight hours. Some of them experienced such prompt and remarkable improvement, in fact, that they went out of their way to praise the tablets as the most effective treatments they had ever taken. Apart from the humor of the situation, this control group showed that approximately 35 per cent of patients would have recovered quickly regardless of any medication. For the purposes of our studies, therefore, we put down as of little or no value all cold medications from which less than 50 per cent of our subjects reported benefit.

Virtually all of the most commonly used medications proved, on this basis, to be almost valueless. This group of remedies included aspirin, calcium and iodine, halibut liver oil (which is vitamin A), amytal, ephedrine, atropine, an aspirin-phenacetin-caffeine compound (which is sold under various names) and soda.

Although aspirin ranks at the top of this group, the results from it are very little better than from the sugar tablets. This is true regardless of the brand of aspirin used, "genuine" or otherwise.

Even less valuable were the results obtained from soda, another widely recommended cold remedy. Advertisers have emphasized the importance of "alkalization" in the treatment of colds. In this

study we gave sufficient dosages of soda to produce much more alkalization than is possible from any of the commercial preparations sold in drug stores. Yet the results of this alkalization were exactly the same as those reported from the sugar tablets.

Perhaps the most commonly used of all cold remedies are the preparations to be dropped or sprayed into the nose. In our studies we selected the most extensively advertised and widely sold brand of "nose drops."

It was transferred to unlabeled bottles, and then dispensed to the students with the directions given by the manufacturer. Only 31 per cent reported benefit from it, about the same as those who used sugar tablets.

Nasal preparations not only have little value, but may do harm by interfering with the body's natural defenses. Medical research has shown that the common cold is usually initiated by a virus or by bacteria which gain entry through the upper respiratory tract. A primary stage of infection follows, whose symptoms are stuffiness of the nose, sneezing, watery nasal discharge, dryness of the throat, occasionally mild headaches, and often mild general symptoms—but with no elevation of temperature and a usual duration of four to five days. This stage may be followed by secondary infections caused by other germs that happen to be present in the nose and throat. The secondary stage is accompanied by a thick, yellow discharge, and runs a typical subacute course of two or three weeks.

## II

Nature has provided man with remarkable local defenses against these bacterial invaders. At the entrance to the nasal passages are tiny hairs, called vibrissae, which filter out the larger particles of foreign material in the air. Next in the defense system are numerous glands located throughout the membranes of the nose. These glands constantly produce a moist, slightly sticky secretion which covers the surfaces of the membranes with a mucous film. The film is in constant movement toward the pharynx, and is renewed approximately every ten minutes. It has been estimated that 75 per cent of the dust and germs present in the air are removed in this manner.

The mucous film also protects the delicate membranes of the nose from mechanical injury by particles of dust. It is extremely difficult for bacteria to find their way through this mucous cover-

ing as long as it remains intact. On the other hand, injury to this mucous coat and exposure of the underlying membranes opens a portal of entry for infection.

Last of nature's defenses are the cilia. These are microscopic, hair-like projections covering most of the mucous membranes in the nose. They are in constant wave-like motion, much like fields of grain. They pick up cells and particles of foreign matter and carry these to the pharynx, from which they are discharged or swallowed.

Nasal preparations may be harmful precisely because they can destroy or interfere with this defense system. Drying and medicated oils first slow and eventually stop the action of the cilia. Their constant use may even destroy respiratory epithelium. More important, nasal sprays or oils, though they may give temporary relief of congestion and stuffiness, frequently produce a distinct irritation of the nasal mucous membranes, in this way facilitating the path of secondary bacterial infection.

Finally, there is always the danger of a specific type of pneumonia that may result from the inhalation of oily substances into the lungs. For all of these reasons, nose and throat specialists warn against the introduction of medicinal preparations into the nose. It should be done only when definitely indicated and recommended by a physician for the treatment of some specific condition.

Equally useless are the mouth washes, gargles and antiseptics urged by advertisers upon the public. These preparations may destroy germs in test tubes if given sufficient time. But none of them acts instantaneously, nor are they effective in the weak solutions which can be tolerated by the membranes of the nose and throat. Furthermore, only a very small proportion of the membranes of the nose and throat can possibly be reached by sprays and gargles.

Several other more or less universal home remedies proved valueless in our studies. Cathartics of various kinds, for example, have long figured in home treatment of colds, and are included in many of the advertised remedies. Actually, two recent studies both show that cathartics are of no value in colds, and that patients who take them lose more time from work than those who do not.

Another popular belief stresses the value of large quantities of liquids, in the form of water, lemonade, orange juice and other



drinks. The purpose of the liquids is to increase excretion. Presumably, this aids in the elimination of the supposedly toxic products produced by the infection. This sounds plausible, but unfortunately there is no evidence that it actually occurs.

Alcohol, in the form of whiskey, brandy and "hot toddies," is still another popular remedy of dubious value. Fear of increasing that popularity prevented us from using it in our series of studies. Scientifically, there may be some basis, or perhaps excuse, for the use of alcohol in colds. It causes an increase in the blood flow to the skin, with a resultant feeling of warmth if one is wet and chilled. On the other hand, alcohol itself causes nasal congestion in some people; and many reliable studies have shown that its continuous or excessive use lowers resistance to pneumonia, the most serious complication of colds.

### III

Considerable effort has been made in recent years to discover possible measures for the *prevention* of colds. Two types of treatment have received particular notice. One of them is the use of dietary measures, including the taking of vitamins. The other employs the various kinds of cold vaccines.

A complete, adequate and balanced diet is necessary for the maintenance of health. But beyond this general truth, no special diet has value for either the prevention or the cure of colds. The same is true of vitamins, which have been particularly exploited as a preventive method. Studies have shown that both animals and man have a decreased resistance to infections of various kinds when suffering from vitamin deficiencies; and apparently this may be true for each of the better known vitamins. But it has not been shown that use of particular vitamins has any value for the prevention of colds. Although cod-liver oil, which contains vitamins A and D, has been reported by a number of authors to reduce the severity and the frequency of colds, most of these reports are based upon inadequately controlled studies.

To determine the value of cold vaccines, studies were made over a period of several years. These vaccines—not "cold serums" as they are commonly called—contain various mixtures of the bacteria most commonly found in the nose and throat of persons infected with colds. Our studies included two bacterial vaccines. One was administered hypodermically and the other by mouth.

Here again, we took special precautions to ensure maximum reliability. The students who volunteered for the study were assigned alternately and without selection to control groups and experimental groups. The control group received blanks instead of vaccines; but all students thought they were receiving vaccine, and so had the same attitude toward the study. Each student reported to the Health Service whenever a cold developed, and kept a record of each cold of more than twenty-four hours' duration. But even the physicians who saw these patients did not know which group they represented. The number and severity of colds experienced by these students were then tabulated according to the group—control or vaccine—to which they belonged.

First, here are the results obtained from injected bacterial vaccine, or "cold shots"—the oldest and most widely used vaccine. The students vaccinated with it reported that during the previous year they had averaged 4.7 colds per person. During the year that they were taking the vaccine they averaged only 2.1 colds per person. This is a reduction of 55 per cent—apparently an excellent result. In fact, this reduction was the same as has been reported in other studies, indicating that these vaccines are of value.

Unfortunately, this report was completely neutralized by the control students who reported an average of 4.9 colds during the previous year. During the year of the study, they had only 1.9 colds, a reduction of 61 per cent. In other words, the control group, which got nothing of any possible value for the prevention of colds, reported just as good results as did the group which got the vaccine. It is thus easy to see how enthusiastic recommendations may be made in good faith for particular cold remedies, and still be entirely without scientific justification.

Our results with the oral vaccine were astonishingly similar. This oral vaccine consists essentially of the same organisms contained in the vaccines for subcutaneous use. They are killed by heat and administered in capsules or tablets. In our study, the students of the experimental group received capsules containing vaccine. The control group received capsules filled only with sugar.

The reports from the vaccinated group showed a reduction of approximately 70 per cent in the average number of colds per person in the year of study. This looked like an excellent result, and was again approximately the same reduction as had been re-

ported by other investigators. But the control group, as in the previous study, also reported the same reduction in the average number of colds. Moreover, during the year of the study the vaccinated group had an average of 2.1 colds per person, which was virtually the same as the 2.0 average reported by the control group. To make the parallel even more striking, the average number of days lost per person from school work was exactly the same for the two groups!

#### IV

Is there any remedy, then, of value in the treatment of colds?

There is no measure that is uniformly effective for the prevention of the common cold. Our studies, however, did reveal one group of medications which seemed to have distinct benefit. I have already stated that morphine, which is a derivative of opium, showed excellent results but was discarded because of its dangers. But several other derivatives of opium, which are less toxic and carry no practical danger of habituation, proved to be definitely valuable. In our first studies, codeine and papaverine both gave evidence of value in the treatment of acute colds. Neither was so effective as morphine, however, and since both are quite different chemically it was decided to try them in combination.

The codeine-papaverine mixture proved to be, after morphine, the most valuable of all cold medications. A preparation consisting of one-quarter grain of codeine and one-quarter grain of papaverine was finally selected as the most effective dosage. Of 1,500 students who were given this preparation for the treatment of acute head colds, 72 per cent reported definite improvement or complete relief within twenty-four to forty-eight hours. The chief beneficial effect was a marked decrease or complete disappearance of nasal congestion and discharge. With the relief of these symptoms, in many cases, the progress of the cold seemed to be arrested and the secondary stage of protracted nasal discharge avoided.

While taking this medication, most of the students were up and about, attending classes. Had they remained in bed while using it, it is probable that even better results might have been obtained. The earlier in the course of the cold that this preparation is used, the larger the proportion of good results. This prepara-

tion, commonly called Copavin, is not advertised to the public. But it is available through physicians, who should decide when and in what dosage it should be used.

Since these studies were made, confirmatory reports have been published by several other investigators. Dr. Russell Cecil of New York, and Dr. Fritz Hutter of Vienna, both found that the codeine-papaverine mixture was particularly beneficial if used by their patients at the very beginning of the infection. In this connection, too, it is of interest to recall the statement that opium users rarely have colds. De Quincey, in his *Confessions*, wrote that during the years in which he had taken opium he "never once caught cold, as the phrase is, nor even the slightest cough. But after discontinuing the use of opium, a violent cold attacked me, and a cough soon after." In a similar vein writes Cocteau, in his *Diary of an Addict*. "Opium," he says, "is a season. The smoker no longer suffers from changes in the weather. He never catches cold."

Less effective, but still of moderate value, were several other opium derivatives. In addition to codeine alone and papaverine alone, it was found that powdered opium and the old-fashioned Dover's powder (a combination of powdered opium and powdered ipecac) were beneficial. Quinine also came to be included in this group of moderately valuable medications. The proportion of individuals who reported "complete relief" or "definite improvement" after the use of these preparations ranged from 57 per cent for powdered opium down to 50 per cent for quinine.

## V

Finally, certain general hygienic measures are helpful in the treatment of colds. Going to bed and remaining there until recovery is good advice. The value of bed rest lies in protecting others from exposure, in increasing general resistance, and in keeping the body warm. Bed rest during the acute stages of colds, supplemented by such other treatment as is indicated, would diminish their severity, limit their spread and reduce the frequency of complications.

Hot baths for the treatment of colds may consist of hot water, hot air or steam. The effect of these baths is to dilate the blood vessels of the skin and to increase blood flow through them. As a result, nasal congestion and stuffiness are reduced. Similar effects may be obtained with massage or other forms of physio-

therapy, with hot or cold compresses, mustard plasters and certain medicated ointments. If such treatments are followed by rest in bed with sufficient covers to prevent cooling, the effect is prolonged and the possibility of their being of more than temporary benefit is increased. Exercise, frequently utilized by athletes to "sweat out" a cold, has a similar effect. But usually the symptoms return when the body gets chilled, and then the cold may become even more severe than before.

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

### COMPREHENSION TEST

Of the following seven statements, three are main points. Check the three main points.

1. These investigations were carried on at the University of Minnesota.
2. Many widely advertised cold remedies are worthless; some may even be harmful.
3. Students treated with sugar tablets showed little or no improvement.
4. A derivative of opium (codeine and papaverine) was found useful in treating colds.
5. Staying in bed for the duration of a cold has many values.
6. Nasal oils and sprays were found harmful.
7. The first type of cold remedy experimented with was hot baths.

Key: Correct answers are two, four, and five.

### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
4 min.	750	9 min.	333
5 min.	600	10 min.	300
6 min.	500	11 min.	272
7 min.	429	12 min.	250
8 min.	375	13 min.	231

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

Plot this rate on your progress graph.

375.

## Rapid Comprehension Exercise 26

### GIVE YOUNG DOCTORS A BREAK<sup>5</sup>

by J. D. Ratcliff

**Start timing**→It is axiomatic that the future of medicine lies in the hands of highly trained young physicians. Yet in a shockingly high percentage of communities these gifted young men are being systematically barred from practice by older men—medical monopolists.

It works this way. Young Dr. Smith completes his long, arduous and expensive medical training. He then passes the examinations which qualify him as a specialist. He finds a town that needs a man of his talents. He then applies to the local hospital for admission to the staff—which will permit him to take patients to that hospital.

The older physicians he talks to are friendly. But what about the hospital appointment, he asks? Here he runs head on into the ugly facts of medical economics.

In a great many communities older doctors do not want aggressive competition. In this respect they are like others involved in making a living. Yet there is a difference. A lawyer would find it difficult to keep another lawyer from opening an office. A filling station operator would find it impossible to keep a competitor off an attractive corner. Physicians *do* have the power to squelch potentially dangerous competition—by denying hospital staff appointments.

Dr. Smith is told he must serve a “probationary period.” How long this probationary period is to last is left up in the air. Dr. Smith can treat sniffles and boils and children’s leg aches. But if any of his patients require hospital care, he must refer them to a man already on the staff—probably never to see them again. Patients conclude that there must be something wrong with Dr. Smith—otherwise he would be admitted to the hospital. Therefore, why go back to him?

Of course there are a good many established doctors who make a point of helping the young Dr. Smiths of America. But they are

<sup>5</sup> From the *Woman’s Home Companion*, copyright 1948 by Crowell-Collier Publishing Co. Reprinted with permission of the author.

comparatively few. There are cases where Dr. Smiths have waited one to five years for hospital appointments; and cases where appointments have never been granted. Dean Willard C. Rappleye of Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons considers this "the greatest waste in our present system of medical service." It is accentuating the drift to the cities, where there is too much medical practice to be controlled by any small group of monopolists. It is robbing smaller communities of the bright young men who might revitalize the whole practice of medicine.

War gave one rapidly growing southern city dozens of new industries—each required one or more doctors. Young physicians saw this as an easy means of getting into practice in the town. But the hospital staff moved swiftly. They decreed that these men would have to wait a minimum of five years for a hospital appointment. The same sort of action was also taken in many west coast cities.

In another town in the midwest the hospital staff required interns to sign agreements not to practice in the town for at least ten years after their training!

In other situations young physicians receive hospital appointments—but have no patients referred to them by older doctors. This happened to a young surgeon in a Pennsylvania town. Other physicians were quick to detect his remarkable skill. In his first year he performed only eight operations. Each patient was the wife of a physician! The doctors wanted their wives to have the best. At the end of a year the young man gave up.

A question naturally arises. Isn't surgery an art which is acquired only after years of practice? Many professors in teaching hospitals answer this with an emphatic *no*. The young men turned out today are, they say, the most highly qualified in the profession. To be sure, they will continue to learn in practice. Strong emphasis should be placed on another point: we aren't speaking here of graduates from Grade B medical schools. We are speaking of the really well-trained young physicians—who face the same difficulties as the most poorly-trained.

Let's take a specific case of what a well-trained young man goes through before he is ready to hang out his shingle. In premedical college Jim S. was a brilliant student—straight A's. He knew he had to be good to get into the medical college he had selected, one of the finest in the world. When he completed this preliminary

training there were twenty-five hundred applications for one hundred places in the freshman class of this medical college. He managed to make it.

Even though he cut expenses to the bone, Jim was a big drain on his family, which was none too well off. Tuition, books and lab fees, room, board, clothing, trips home (on a bus) and other expenses brought the total per year to two thousand dollars.

Jim graduated in 1939. By this time he had decided to specialize in surgery. He had fine manual dexterity and ability to reason calmly under stress—qualifications for a good surgeon. The problem facing him now was to get an internship.

It was simple enough, Jim knew, to get an internship if one weren't too choosy. But in many hospitals an internship is little better than a form of slave labor. Such hospitals offer meager opportunities to learn.

So Jim applied for internship in the great teaching hospital associated with the medical college from which he had been graduated. There were hundreds of applications for the nine internships open in general surgery at Metropolis Hospital. Grave-faced physicians prodded him with questions. His past life was investigated, his class records and grades scrutinized. Finally Jim was accepted for one of the nine places.

During his eighteen months' internship Jim still had to rely on his family for help. Bed and board were free and there were no tuition or lab fees. Still, he had to have some money—fifty dollars a month.

In most hospitals Jim would have had little surgical practice. But in his eighteen months at Metropolis he did a number of major operations—always, of course, with an older, more experienced man at his side.

At the end of his internship Jim might have gone into private practice. But he still felt he wasn't ready. He wanted more graduate training as a resident, a residency being the main avenue toward a specialty.

At this point competition had become really fierce. Only five interns would be selected for junior assistant residencies (fifty dollars per month) in surgery. Again Jim was fortunate—thanks to his readily recognized talents. Then the Japs struck, on December 7, 1941. Jim was in uniform by February, 1942, commissioned a captain.

When the invasion did come, Jim moved into Holland. It was



hard, grinding work. Jim realized that war was the greatest of all laboratories in which to learn surgery. In weeks or months a man could accumulate experience he would spend years getting in civilian practice.

Jim wound up his army service in November, 1945, came back to student life—and to a degree of not-so-genteel poverty. As assistant resident his salary was seventy-five dollars a month. Thus the grind went on—the grind that is required today of any man who wishes to become a really skilled practitioner of a medical specialty.

By 1946 Jim had gone through his junior assistant residency and his assistant residency. He was now ready for his senior residency (one hundred dollars a month)—if he could get it. In the United States there are probably no more than a hundred and twenty-five senior residencies in surgery—and Jim had picked one of the most difficult of all spots to apply, world-famous Metropolis Hospital.

Jim got the appointment. He did great and difficult pieces of surgery during this year—removal of lungs, kidney surgery, exploration of the common bile duct for tiny stones that cause blockage.

At this point the reader would conclude that any hospital in the country would welcome Jim. The fact is that Jim knew he would be barred from practice in hundreds of communities by men with a fraction of his skill. He might have to wait one to five years before he could perform the types of major surgery for which he has unusual talent.

Furthermore, he knew that he would not have access to hospital libraries with the books and journals which he could not afford. Nor would he have the elaborate equipment and diagnostic aids which he had been taught to rely on. Jim had some rather sour thoughts about his wisdom in selecting medicine as a career. When the medical college from which he was graduated offered him a job as instructor in surgery, Jim jumped at it. The salary: thirty-six hundred dollars a year.

The objection will be raised that Jim is hardly typical of the young physician entering practice. This is true. He isn't. He is representative of the best. But the hundreds of Jims among the five thousand odd physicians who will enter practice this year will face the same barriers that confront the most poorly trained. Religious and racial prejudices further complicate the picture.

Thus hundreds of communities are denied the superior type of medical and surgical service which these young physicians might provide. There are many towns of fifty thousand people with not a single modernly trained surgeon.

The solution? There is no easy one. The best medical minds are troubled by the situation. One group suggests that once a student has passed his specialty board examinations—which screen out all but the most highly qualified—he should be admitted to any hospital staff automatically.

Another group contends this would produce ruinous competition which would tend to lower medical standards. As an alternative they see group or clinic practice as the answer—where an orthopedist, internist, pediatrician and other specialists go together to give a community a miniature Mayo or Lahey clinic. Whatever the answer, the problem is there—an ugly stumbling block on the road to better medical care. It is one requiring thought and action, for as long as it exists, many communities will continue to get 1920 medicine for 1948 ills.

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. Young doctors need more practice before they should be permitted to attempt difficult surgical cases.
2. All over the country, especially in the less populated areas, many older doctors who don't want competition have found a way to bar brilliant young doctors from using their talents. They do this by refusing them appointments on hospital staffs, or making it most difficult for men to get such appointments.
3. Older doctors do not want aggressive competition, because they feel that the public will suffer.
4. Young doctors should be permitted to gain skill by practicing on patients, even if it is not for the patient's ultimate good.

*Key:* Subtract two from three and add one to determine the number of the correct answer.

# TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
2 min.	843	4 min., 30 sec.	374
2 min., 15 sec.	749	5 min.	337
2 min., 30 sec.	674	5 min. 30 sec.	306
2 min., 45 sec.	613	6 min.	281
3 min.	562	7 min.	241
3 min., 30 sec.	482	8 min.	211
4 min.	422		

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

Plot this rate on your progress graph.

## *Rapid Comprehension Exercise 27*

### SELF-RESPECT AND SELF-CONFIDENCE <sup>6</sup>

by Douglas Remsen, M.D.

**Start timing**→No one can live with himself comfortably without self-respect; without self-confidence no one can enjoy the sense of satisfaction in accomplishment. Self-respect depends upon an emotional equilibrium in which anger, resentment, fear, and love are supports to the person's efforts and activities, not whips which drive and lacerate. Self-confidence depends upon ability, upon the adequacy to meet a situation, or to do something successfully. It incorporates also a capacity to take stock, to be honest in self-appraisal, so that one doesn't shoot at the moon and torture oneself for missing it. It means knowing what one knows—and more important—knowing what one doesn't know and not being ashamed to say so.

The standards we set unconsciously—social, puritanical, intellectual, perfectionistic—we rarely meet perfectly; but too many of us dwell upon the things we *didn't* do, the questions we *didn't* answer, to the point where the things done well are insufficient to support our self-respect and nurture our self-confidence. Then there follows self-abasement, inferiority feelings, inhibitions, and depression.

This quirk of human nature frequently has its roots in the home and environmental settings. As a small child, little Willie is sub-

<sup>6</sup> From *Talk*. Reprinted with permission.

jected to a constant barrage of: Don't!, Quit!, Stop it!, Why did you do that?—the equivalent of "You stupid little idiot." The parent forgets that he or she is Olympian authority in the small one's eyes. This constant equivalent of "you stupid little idiot" chokes the childish struggle for being important and for building self-confidence. There is no thought of giving any praise or approval to the fumbling successes of the child. And the final lethal dose of poison to budding self-respect and self-confidence is "Aren't you ashamed of yourself?" administered so frequently with no thought of its stultifying effect. In later years, the fear of being shamed throws the stutterer into a dither, sends the alcoholic to have another drink, and the neurotic to hide in the cave of his inhibitions.

Mr. X, a stutterer, never stutters when he issues commands as a drill sergeant at the armory. He is confident and sure. But when he meets any person who symbolizes authority, he stutters miserably. He first stuttered when he faced uniformed authority five years ago to take a test and failed. You will not be surprised to learn that his stern father, the symbol of authority, never offered him as a child a word of approval for his accomplishments, but only the belittling condemnation of "Aren't you ashamed?"

It's time for an inventory. Take stock, but with excitement; not with the doubts of an inhibited soul! What you have done and experienced can be the foundation for self-respect and self-confidence.

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. Don't aim for standards you cannot achieve, nor worry about your failures. Instead, think of your successes and gain self-confidence from them.
2. Praise your children; never belittle them.
3. You cannot get anywhere in this highly competitive world unless you learn from your failures and thus eventually turn failure into success. This is the road to self-respect and self-confidence.
4. Stutterers and alcoholics have no self-confidence.

**Key:** Subtract two from three to determine the number of the correct answer.

#### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
40 sec.	642	1 min., 30 sec.	286
50 sec.	516	1 min., 45 sec.	244
1 min.	428	2 min.	214
1 min., 15 sec.	344		

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

Plot this rate on your progress graph.

### *Rapid Comprehension Exercise 28*

#### DIET AND DIE

by Carlton Fredericks, M.A.<sup>7</sup>

**Start timing**→Most Americans love to diet. Men and women, old and young, plump and fat, rich and poor, sooner or later are tempted to try some "miracle diet" that promises to shed weight easily, quickly, and painlessly. Yet in their eagerness to outwit the laws of nature and medicine, they forget that improper dieting can lead to grim and inexorable death.

But wait a minute, you protest. Isn't that statement about death extreme? Intelligent people don't go in for lethal diets and deadly food fads. They cut out fats and starches, to be sure; perhaps they try mineral-oil salad dressings or some of the other widely publicized tricks. But can such dietary shortcuts lead directly to the grave?

Well, it is true that death certificates never read "Reducing Diet." Yet science has taught us that a human body lacking in a full ration of proteins and vitamins stands little chance in a fight against disease. So no matter how the certificates may read, if death comes on the heels of a reducing diet, who is the real culprit? The disease germ itself, or the inadequate diet that weakened the body?

<sup>7</sup> From *Coronet*, April, 1947, copyright 1947 by Esquire, Inc. Reprinted with permission of *Coronet* and of the author. Mr. Fredericks is a nationally known nutrition research consultant and nutrition commentator over radio station WMGM, New York.

First, let's glance at some case histories in Hollywood, where the camera makes everyone look ten pounds heavier. Thanks to this phenomenon of the lens, the calory is the god of movie stars. And because the waistline is the lifeline of film society, the calory has driven some studio notables to gastronomic suicide.

Remember Laird Cregar, brilliant but bulky screen villain? Villains don't make romantic stars, so he decided to reduce. In a few months he starved away 100 pounds. As delighted as his tailor, he looked forward to more glamorous roles.

The end of the story was no beat of publicity drums for the "new" Cregar, but a muffled roll for his death. Actually it occurred on the operating table, yet everyone knows that operations are more often successful if the patient is strong and in good condition. Was this precipitous loss of weight and the untimely loss of life merely a strange coincidence?

And how about bent-nosed, beloved Louis Wolheim? Months and pounds passed away as he dieted. Then the wire services flashed the stark words: "Louis Wolheim, ex-professor of mathematics, star of *What Price Glory?* died suddenly tonight." Wolheim's death certificate didn't read "starvation." But did he decide to juggle calories with waistline and forget to hold on to health? . . .

Now for the case of a third Hollywood star. By the grace of her physician's intervention she is still on the screen, so let's call her plain Mary. She was another who found herself losing in the endless fight against the fattening camera, so she condemned herself to breakfasts of black coffee and butterless toast, luncheons of skimpy salads and almost vitamin-free Melba toast, dinners of one lamb chop, vegetable and coffee. Yet even this diet, pittance for a hard-working body, failed to bring her weight down.

Whereupon Mary shifted from skimpiness to starvation. This did the trick—yet scarcely had she remodeled her wardrobe when she was rushed to a sanitarium.

The studio said: "Mary has been overworking. She must guard against a nervous breakdown."

The truth was, Mary's reducing diet lacked everything the human body needs to sustain life. *Everything*: proteins, calories, fats, vitamins, minerals, and bulk.

Unfortunately, you don't have to be a movie star to find the die in diet. Furthermore, for the unknown ordinary thousands who learn too late, there are countless others who escape the grave,

only to fall victim to influenza, pneumonia, insanity, prolonged invalidism, and pregnancy complications.

If you embark on a dolt's diet—which they all are unless tailored by an expert to your own specifications—any of these disasters can occur. According to the Mayo Clinic, a group of volunteer subjects traveled to the edge of insanity on what seemed to be a nourishing diet. It was adequate indeed, as to calories, but far below the danger point in a vitamin essential to the nervous system. After a few months every “guinea pig” reported insomnia, forgetfulness, confusion, apathy, and “an inescapable sense” that some misfortune awaited him.

Further proof that proper nutrition involves far more than a minimum number of calories is offered by the case of Miss S.R. Proud of her figure, this young Manhattan woman fought the battle of the bulge successfully until she underwent an operation. Then inactivity and a forced diet caused her to gain twenty pounds. Her doctor wisely refused to help, saying: “Plenty of time for that when you're completely well again.”

So S.R. walked out on him and into the hands of a “specialist”—“naturopath,” to be precise. This gentleman was happy to take her currency in return for placing her on a two-month diet of nothing but mashed potatoes and fruit juices. As the pounds slipped away, S.R. was happy too. Delighted, in fact—until they began slipping too fast.

Fright then set in, changing to terror when her face erupted with boils, her ankles swelled, her nails grew dry and brittle, and her hair fell out by the handful. Sensibly she dropped the diet. But it was too late; the symptoms continued. So back to her doctor she went—pale, sallow, anemic.

He found her deficient in everything essential to minimum nutrition. Like many people, she didn't realize that nutritional deficiencies can become irreversible. In other words, human cells too long deprived of essential substances reach a point where they cannot assimilate these substances, no matter how the concentrations are administered.

S.R. happened to be lucky. A high protein diet, ample in calories, rich in vitamins and minerals, brought her slowly back to normal. And today she has a stock reply to everyone who mentions the subject of reducing: “Narrow coffins cost as much as wide ones.”

Because we are civilized people, we like our meat “fractionated”

—that is, the muscle meats separated from the organ meats, just as we prefer grains stripped of the vitamin-rich bran and germ. While we attempt partially to replace natural vitamins lost in baker's bread with synthetic ones, we do not replace the food values lost in eating muscle meats without the organs.

The Eskimos forestall this danger intuitively. They gobble their animals from nose to tail, including bone marrow, with the result that pernicious anemia and prematurely gray hair are rare in the Arctic. When white explorers contract scurvy up there, the Eskimos cure them with animals' adrenal glands containing high concentrations of vitamin C.

Suppose your "common sense" low-starch muscle-meat diet happens to lack pantothenic acid, the vitamin which affects the endocrine gland. Dogs deficient in it look well and even eat well, right up to the moment when, without warning, they drop dead.

We have much to learn about the effects of pantothenic acid on human beings, yet we know that a lack of it produces an unhealthy mouth and tongue. It also slows down peristalsis of the colon, a phenomenon which contributes to the \$100,000,000-a-year laxative business—and to nothing else.

Yes—the fact that people don't die from their diets is a testimonial not to the diet but to the adaptability of the human body. For example, the wiseacres who substitute mineral oil for salad dressings are making, in one step, more mistakes than their instinct for error should permit.

Mineral oil hinders the body in absorbing the fat-soluble vitamins A, D, E and K. Vitamin A prevents colds and skin trouble; D helps the skin to assimilate oxygen; E wards off miscarriage and other pregnancy complications; K is the blood-clotting vitamin that slows down or averts hemorrhages. Mineral oil also interferes with the absorption of C, the anti-tooth-decay vitamin. I have actually seen scurvy in children fed plenty of orange juice—and too much mineral oil. The oil washes the vitamin out of the body.

But there's still more to the grim story. Mineral oil forms a coating in the digestive tract which sneers at the vitally important vitamin-B complex—the B complex which serves many functions, such as helping digestion. Americans who contracted heart weakness as prisoners of war and were released before the muscle failure had become irreversible responded successfully to B complex treatment.

Some scientists suspect that the human embryo itself is affected



by B complex deficiency. We know it causes harelips, cleft palates, and bone derangements in animals. It has not yet been proved that human harelips are similarly caused, but the implication is enough to warn against toying with vitamin-B complex.

If I have persuaded you that there is a die in diet, so much the better. Yet reducing *can* be safe and successful. All you need do is follow a few simple rules.

First, if you are too fat you must discover the cause. It may be plain overeating, a glandular defect, or even nerves.

Actually, neurotic frustration is a common cause, as in the case of T.W., a 35-year-old Brooklyn housewife. Five feet six inches tall, she weighed 245 pounds—all of it acquired on a diet of penny candy, coffee, meat, cigarettes, laxatives and indigestion remedies. She complained that the skimpy meals merely added more weight. Her dietitian soon discovered she had never been popular with men, and that food proved a happy substitute. Even her small amount was always there, always pleasing and soothing.

The dietitian persuaded her to toss the candy overboard, while the skimpy meals were replaced by three balanced ones, low only in calories. She felt she was eating more, but she lost 115 pounds in 18 months.

When she reached her proper weight she became pregnant for the first time in seven years of married life. Her grateful glands had finally responded, a frequent result once fatness has been overcome by a balanced diet.

Glandular obesity is as rare as a hen's tooth. Only one case of overweight in a thousand, say the specialists, can be traced to the glands. Yet glands serve as scapegoats for droves of fat females.

Of course thyroid and pituitary obesity do exist. But the rare case of thyroid overweight is not necessarily corrected by administering extract, for the gland may have become underactive for quite another reason: a deficiency of vitamin B<sub>1</sub> or thiamine.

Hydrated individuals, people whose tissues store abnormal quantities of water, sometimes lose weight under a diet of restricted salt and fluids. And occasionally effective treatment is given for pituitary disturbance. But whether obesity is normal or otherwise, diet is the first step that must be taken. Everything else is secondary.

Once you have discovered why you are fat, it is time to start shedding the pounds. And a good way to begin is to get rid of all your food superstitions.

No phase of nutrition has provoked more folklore than reducing. Often you hear people say: "Don't eat that. It's fattening." Just ignore them. No food is fattening in itself, any more than an extra shovel of coal is necessarily too much for the furnace.

Like coal, food makes energy. Like the furnace, your body needs food to burn into energy. Without knowing how much fuel has already been fed to the furnace, how do you know which shovelful is too much? The same thing is true of food. The kind and quantity must be determined in exact relation to the body's needs.

A particularly vicious superstition is the one which says, "Don't take vitamins when reducing. They make you gain." Only calories make you gain. Vitamins have no calories. They do, however, perform the vital job of protecting you against the deficiencies of a reducing diet. That is why nutritionists supplement diets with vitamin prescriptions.

In addition to getting rid of superstitions and guarding against nutritional deficiencies, avoid drugs. The magic road to sylphdom was never traveled with a suitcase of pills and potions. At best they are useless. At worst they pack a terrible wallop of misery. Let those who tried excess doses of various phenol products show you the cataracts on their eyes.

Psyllium-seed laxatives, touted because they form bulk and thus create an illusion of fullness in the stomach, are of no value unless taken under careful medical guidance. Most other "reducing aids" are merely powerful laxatives—and nothing more. Concocted of salts, leaves or herbs, they rush foods through the system so fast that the calories vanish along with the food. So do the vitamins, minerals, and proteins. If this is your choice of how to lose weight, why bother to eat at all?

But you still think there is a magic road to reducing? Exercise, for example, or massage or nine-day diets? Exercise will not do it. Look at the charts to see how many miles of walking is necessary to dispose of the calories in one lamb chop and an apple.

Massage is a wonderful reducer—for the massager. Try to pound the fat out of a piece of meat. Even a sledge hammer won't do it, and surely you are not going to put that kind of a weapon in the hefty arms of your masseur.

As to most of the nine-day wonder diets, the wonder is that you survive. Many nutrition specialists warn against them because their caloric restrictions are too severe or because they lack vitamins. Yet this imbalance is a minor drawback compared to the one they share with all mass-production diets. Whether a reducing

regimen includes starvation, drugs, psychoanalysis, deficiencies, and nine- or even 90-day schedules, it is never suitable for all cases of obesity. Every diet must be individually planned.

A physician may order a 1,200-calory diet to take 40 pounds off a 160-pounder, and he may prescribe the same number of calories from a totally different diet to remove the same weight from a 200-pounder. This is because the two people have different requirements, and indulge in different activities. These and other variables must be carefully considered when one is prescribing a diet tailored precisely to each individual's needs.

C.K. found this out to her eventual joy. At 16, she carried 178 pounds on a five-foot chassis. Yet she, a growing girl, lived on a cruel diet of 800 calories a day, supplemented by baneful drugs and thyroid tablets. And to make matters worse, she kept gaining!

Vitamin-B complex, multiple vitamin and mineral capsules were substituted for the drugs she had been taking, and a 1,200-calory diet was ordered, well balanced but not too high in proteins. For the first ten days she was restricted in salt and fluid intake. The youngster proceeded to lose 12 pounds in 40 days. Today she weighs 110 pounds. Her complexion, hair and nails are proof enough of her excellent health.

Whoever you are and whatever your individual requirements, remember that a reducing diet should not be fantastic, distorted, unbalanced, or deficient in anything essential to health. It should be supplemented with the calorie-free elements it lacks. Except that it is low in calories, it should be a miniature of an unrestricted diet.

The acid test of a perfect reducing diet is this: *Can you expand the size of the portions and live happily ever after?* If not, think of those deceptive death certificates and, with the help of a competent doctor, work out a diet which will meet every nutritional test.

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

#### COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. Unwise dieting will mean a sure and quick trip to the cemetery.

2. The advice of a physician is not necessary in selecting a proper diet if we just use common sense.

3. A proper diet means a tailor-made selection of low calory foods containing every element necessary to health.

4. A number of well-known Hollywood stars died because the strain of dieting as well as acting proved too much for their constitutions.

5. Nutritional deficiencies, if unduly prolonged, can always be overcome by skillful doctoring.

6. In preparing a diet, the expert nutritionist mainly has to select fattening foods to be avoided.

*Key:* Add six and two, subtract five to determine the number of the correct answer.

#### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
3 min.	950	7 min.	407
3 min., 30 sec.	814	7 min., 30 sec.	380
4 min.	706	8 min.	353
4 min., 30 sec.	634	8 min., 30 sec.	336
5 min.	570	9 min.	317
5 min., 30 sec.	518	10 min.	285
6 min.	475	11 min.	259
6 min., 30 sec.	436	12 min.	238

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.  
Plot this rate on your progress graph.

### *Rapid Comprehension Exercise 29*

#### VOCABULARY AND SUCCESS <sup>8</sup>

by Johnson O'Connor

**Start timing**→What is success? And how is it gained? Whether one thinks of success as financial reward, or as assured social position, or as satisfaction in able work accomplished and recognized,

<sup>8</sup> From the Introduction to Volume I of the *Johnson O'Connor English Vocabulary Builder*, published by the Human Engineering Laboratory, Boston. Reprinted with permission.

or as a combination of the three and something more, many factors contribute. Most of them elude our understanding and remain intangibly beyond definition. A vital force drives some individuals over every obstacle. With others that great generalization, character, add strength of a different sort. Neither may ever be restricted to a hard and fast formula; certainly, at the moment, neither can be measured. But other more concrete constituents of success have been isolated and studied in the laboratory. One of these is a large English vocabulary.

An extensive knowledge of the exact meanings of English words accompanies outstanding success in this country more often than any other single characteristic which the Human Engineering Laboratories have been able to isolate and measure.

What is meant by vocabulary? Just what the word signifies. Does the word *enervating* mean *soothing*, *exciting*, *distressing*, *invigorating*, or *weakening*? For most well-educated persons the choice is between *invigorating* and *weakening*. Fifty-two per cent of the college graduates whom we have measured choose *invigorating* as the synonym; only sixteen per cent choose *weakening*, the dictionary definition. Does *stilted* in the phrase, 'his stilted manner,' mean *irresolute*, *improper*, *cordial*, *stiffly formal*, or *vicious*? A majority of educated persons mark *stiffly formal*, but more than a third mark *irresolute*. Answers to the meaning of *scurrilous*, in the phrase, 'scurrilous rogue,' divide themselves more or less evenly between *hurrying*, *desperate*, *abusive*, *frantic*, and *diseased*, with *desperate* the most popular. For *peremptory*, a majority mark *decisive*, but many choose *persuasive*, *uncertain*, and *angry*. *Pleasant*, the fifth choice, is not as popular. *Linguist* and *glutton* are equally enticing as synonyms for *polyglot*. For *refulgent*, in 'a refulgent smile,' *repellent* is most intriguing and *very bright* next, with *mischievous*, *flattering*, and *sour* all following closely in popularity. For *monograph* forty per cent choose *soliloquy* and less than twenty per cent *treatise* and *epitaph* each.

The word *vocabulary*, as used in this article, signifies a knowledge of the dictionary meaning of just such words as *enervating*, *stilted*, *scurrilous*, *peremptory*, *polyglot*, *refulgent*, and *monograph*. Not until one attempts to pick an exact synonym does one realize the difficulty. One may like the sound of a word and use it in a picturesque way without being accurate in its meaning.

To measure the vocabulary of an individual, the Laboratory uses a list of one hundred and fifty test words. Each is printed in italics in a short phrase and is followed by five choices, all of which fit the phrase but only one of which is a synonym of the test word. The instructions are: 'Underline that one of the five choices which is nearest in meaning to the word in italics.' The words to be defined were selected by Alexander Inglis of the Graduate School of Education, Harvard University. His intention was to include words which appear once or twice in 100,000 words of printed matter. It is a general reader's vocabulary from which technical terms have been excluded. The test words vary from some that are quite easy, such as

*thrilling* experiences—dangerous, exciting, unusual, disgusting, profitable,

to others that are more difficult, such as

*glabrous* heads—bald, over-sized, hairy, square, round,

which only twenty-one per cent of college graduates mark correctly. Since one fifth, or twenty per cent, should guess the correct answer, the meaning of *glabrous* is practically unknown. The test measures knowledge of words one recognizes, not necessarily of those one uses. The words one uses accurately are, no doubt, fewer than those one recognizes, but there is probably a relation between the two.

Three hundred high-school freshmen average 76 errors in the list of 150 words. Seven hundred college freshmen average 42 errors. One thousand college graduates from a wide variety of colleges—most of them, however, in the eastern part of the United States—average 27 errors, and vary from the one person in a thousand who achieves a perfect score to the one who knows less than 50 of the 150 items. The college professors whom we have measured average 8 errors; major executives average 7 errors. Major executives score higher in this English vocabulary test than any other selected group with which we have experimented.

By the term 'major executives' is meant all individuals who, for five years or longer, have held the position of president or vice president in a business organization. Such a definition includes both successful and unsuccessful executives, provided only that

they have survived five years; it includes alike forceful personalities and figureheads; but it has the great advantage of excluding our personal judgment from the process of selection. Major executives as thus defined average in the top ten per cent of college graduates as a whole.

Although it is impossible to define success rigidly or scientifically, it seems to be true, nevertheless, that a large vocabulary is typical, not exclusively of executives, but of successful individuals. It happens that in the business world successful men and women are designated by this special appellation, 'executive.' The successful lawyer or doctor is marked by no such name. But if, to the best of one's ability, one selects successful persons in the professions, they also score high in vocabulary.

For one meaning of success the Century dictionary gives 'a high degree of worldly prosperity.' The measured English vocabulary of an executive correlates with his salary. This does not mean that every high-vocabulary person receives a large salary, but the relation between the two is close enough to show that a large vocabulary is one element, and seemingly an important one.

Furthermore, the executive level which a man or woman reaches is determined to some extent by vocabulary. In many manufacturing organizations the first step in the executive ladder is the leading hand, called sometimes the working foreman. This man is in charge of half a dozen or a dozen others. He works at the bench or at a machine as they do, but is the executive of the group. The next step is the foreman, who may be in charge of as many as a hundred or more individuals. He does no bench work, he is not a producer, but devotes full time to his executive duties, to the keeping of records and to the handling of the personnel. The next step in many large organizations is the department head or superintendent or manager, who ordinarily does not come in direct contact with the workers, but handles them through his foremen. The final step is the major executive or official, the vice president or president of the organization.

These four executive ranks represent four degrees of success, in one sense in which that word is used. One is *advanced* from leading hand to foreman, from foreman to manager, from manager to president. As far as we can determine by measurements, the leading hand and the official have much the same inherent aptitudes. They differ primarily in vocabulary. Typical noncollege-graduate shop foremen average, as a group, about as high as

college graduates. Department heads score higher, roughly fifteen errors, and major executives the highest of all, averaging only seven errors. Whether the word 'executive' refers only to the major group or is used in the broader sense to mean anyone in charge of other workers, it is still true that the executive scores higher than those under him and higher than other persons of similar age and education.

## II

An interesting sidelight on the high vocabulary scores of executives is that they were unforeseen. When a scientist expects a result and finally achieves it there is always the feeling that, regardless of the care he has taken, personal bias may have entered. Six or eight years ago the Human Engineering Laboratories tested forty major executives of the Telephone Company who had offered themselves as victims to be experimented upon in a search for executive characteristics. At the same time the Laboratory was also revising the vocabulary test, not with the notion of using it with executives, but with the hope that it might prove of value in education. One day, with no thought of the consequences, I gave it to an executive, and from then on was asked for it regularly because of the interest it aroused. I paid little heed to the results until one day an executive refused to take the test. He had been obliged by lack of money to leave school at fourteen, and had earned his own living since. With no further formal education, he had worked his way to a major position. He had taken the aptitude tests without hesitation, but vocabulary seemed to him so directly the result of schooling that he knew in advance he would fail. His own words were that he had made his way without being found out and he was not willing to give himself away. But in scientific work one cannot test only those who think they will do well, and we finally persuaded him to try the vocabulary test. He made two errors where the average college graduate makes twenty-seven.

Was it luck? Or was it significant of something which we had not recognized? The Laboratory listed the vocabulary scores of one hundred executives and, parallel with them, the scores of one hundred miscellaneous college graduates. The difference between the two arrays was striking. Only nine per cent of the college graduates scored as high as the average major executive.



Why do large vocabularies characterize executives and possibly outstanding men and women in other fields? The final answer seems to be that words are the instruments by means of which men and women grasp the thoughts of others and with which they do much of their own thinking. They are the tools of thought.

Before accepting so far-reaching a conclusion several more obvious explanations must be examined and excluded. The first and most natural supposition is that successful persons acquire words with age and with the experiences of life. Success does not usually occur early. The successful group were necessarily older in both years and experience than the general run of college graduates with whom they were compared; and their large vocabularies might be the inevitable result of age.

To probe this point a study of the growth of vocabulary with age was undertaken. From twelve, the earliest age for which we have a large number of measurements, to twenty-two or twenty-three vocabulary expands steadily and at a uniform rate. Through this school period the score on the vocabulary test of one hundred and fifty items improves five words a year. From twenty-three to fifty vocabulary continues to increase, but changes no more in these twenty-five years than in two school years—not enough to explain the high scores of executives. Normally, vocabulary is acquired early in life, before most men have made appreciable progress toward a responsible position. The large vocabularies of successful individuals come before success rather than after. Age and the experiences of life may contribute new words, but certainly do not explain in full the high vocabulary scores of business executives.

The next thought is that effective schooling may be the source both of a wide vocabulary and of executive success. It is known, from the work which the American Telephone and Telegraph Company has undertaken, that there is a relationship between school success and business success later in life. Although not everyone who leads his class becomes a brilliant executive, and although not everyone who fails in school fails in life, in general school success preludes executive success. Schooling may be the vital factor of which the large vocabularies which we are measuring are but by-products.

To obtain evidence bearing on this point, we measured the vocabularies of twenty men who had left school at the age of fifteen and who had worked their way into major positions. They also

averaged only seven errors. Their scores equaled those of the college-graduate executives. In the case of these twenty men it is their vocabularies which are important rather than their formal school education. Their large vocabularies are not the result of schooling and must, we therefore conclude, be significant for some other reason than as a by-product of an educational background.

Is, then, a college background of no importance? Has the non-college man the same chance of becoming an executive as has the college graduate? This fact seemed worth determining. Of the major executives in a large industrial organization, sixty per cent are college graduates, forty per cent non-college. At first glance, college would seem to have done little, for almost half are not college men. But, to be fair to education, there is another angle from which to view this result. Of the college graduates with this same company, more than three quarters are in executive positions, whereas, of the non-college men, well under a tenth are in similar positions. College graduates, in general, average measurably higher in vocabulary than do non-college persons. Furthermore, of the college group a significantly larger percentage are executives.

One would like to conclude without further preamble that the vocabularies of the college group are large because of directed effort and that these purposefully gained vocabularies have contributed to executive success. Non-college executives, then, are those rare individuals who pick up words so easily that their vocabularies are large without effort. But there is one further possibility which must be investigated.

Although the vocabulary test was designed to measure knowledge which must have come through books or by word of mouth, a high score may reveal an underlying aptitude for language. It may be this flair which is the contributing factor in both vocabulary and success later in life.

It should be possible to isolate and measure diathesis apart from knowledge. We have worked on this approach for a number of years, thus far unproductively. For the time being we must leave the conclusion of this part of the research in abeyance and admit that the vocabularies of successful executives may reveal an aptitude.

### III

Vocabularies may always be consciously increased regardless of the presence or absence of any gift. A knowledge of the meaning of each word at one's command must have been obtained by word of mouth or through reading, by some educational process.

Furthermore, with groups of individuals of apparently similar aptitudes, the amount of vocabulary added in a given period varies with different educational techniques. At Stevens Institute of Technology the freshman class is divided alphabetically into four sections. Each of these studies freshman English under a different member of the faculty. Four years ago the entire class took the vocabulary test the first week of freshman year. The four sections averaged about the same in vocabulary, and there was no reason to suppose that, selected as they were, one would score higher than another or have more ability. Yet, when remeasured nine months later, two of the sections had improved more than average academic freshmen, one section had improved only half this amount, and the fourth had retrogressed slightly.

The improvement of one section may have been due to the fact that the instructor was interested in the vocabulary test and its implications. The important fact is that differences in vocabulary improvement were caused by differences in teaching techniques—in other words, that an improvement in vocabulary score can be produced by education.

Those boys and girls whom the Laboratory has measured and urged to better their vocabularies, and then remeasured at the end of two or three years, have shown more than average improvement. Here again vocabulary is induced independent of aptitude. It is for this reason that the Human Engineering Laboratories, in helping a youngster to find himself and start in the right direction, use a vocabulary test in lieu of a general intelligence test.

We come now to the question of whether or not that increment of vocabulary directly due to educational stimulation contributes to success. The four sections of the freshman class at Stevens Institute of Technology to which reference has been made, which took freshman English with different members of the faculty and improved different amounts in vocabulary, were followed to see the effect of these new vocabularies on school work the next year. The four sections averaged nearly the same in school marks fresh-

man year. Sophomore year the two sections which had enlarged their vocabularies the previous year showed general gain in all school subjects—not strikingly, not enough to prove the point once and for all time, but enough to suggest that a vocabulary acquired consciously reflects in general school improvement the next year.

It is always possible that the improvement in school work was due to inspired teaching, to added incentive, but if this were true it would seem as if the improvement in school work should appear immediately freshman year, whereas it did not appear until sophomore year after the vocabulary had been acquired. This seems to indicate that it is the additional words themselves which are the tools used the next year, that words are important in and for themselves.

#### IV

Granted that diction is important, and many would agree without elaborate proof of the point, how, from the standpoint of the school, can it best be given; and, from that of the individual, how best achieved? Is it a knowledge of Latin and Greek which lays a sound foundation for a real understanding of words? Or is it constant reading? Or the assiduous perusal of the dictionary? Probably all contribute; as yet we have found no straight and easy road.

In the search for a road to vocabulary we have unearthed several facts which throw light on the learning process. One of these, which, if rightly interpreted, may prove to be of far-reaching importance to education, is that vocabulary advances with an almost unbroken front. The words at the command of an individual are not a miscellany gathered from hither and yon. With a very few exceptions they are all of the words in the dictionary up to those of an order of difficulty at which his vocabulary stops abruptly, and almost no words beyond. In the revised form of the test which is now available for school use, the items are arranged in order of difficulty as determined by actual test results. The first fifteen or twenty words of the test are known to the average high-school freshman or sophomore. The next thirty to forty are on the border line of his knowledge. Some he recognizes, others are vaguely familiar, and others he has not yet encountered. The balance are so far beyond him that he marks correctly no more than the one in five which he guesses by pure chance.

For convenience of scoring, the words are divided into ten groups of constantly increasing difficulty. One who knows the words of Group II, second in difficulty, almost invariably marks correctly every word of Group I. Another youngster who may know the words of, let us say, Group VI rarely fails on a single word in any of the first five easier groups. Similarly, one who fails on twelve of the fifteen words in any one group—that is, marks correctly only the one word in five which he guesses—almost never knows a word in any more difficult group. There are not, as we had expected, stray words in the difficult part which one who fails earlier in the test has stumbled upon and remembered. These unusual words, if previously encountered as they must have been in reading and conversation, are too far beyond the point he has reached to make any lasting impression.

The one exception to this rule is the foreign student who may know difficult words because of their similarity to his own language, but miss much easier ones. Thus the Southern European often marks correctly such difficult words as *cephalic*, *garrulity*, and *piscatorial*, because of knowledge of Italian and French, but fails to know much easier words of Old English origin, such as, for instance, *knack*, *blotch*, and *cope*.

In the region where learning is taking place, the commonest error is the confusion of a word with its exact opposite. Among seventh- and eighth-grade and first-year high-school pupils, nearly a third mark *found guilty* as the correct meaning of *acquitted*. *Upright* is the most popular misconception for the meaning of *reclining*; and, strange as it may seem, *neat* is the commonest misconception of *untidy*. The seventh-grade youngster berated for keeping an untidy room quite often evidently receives the impression that he is too orderly. The failing is not limited to the high-school group. For *incontrovertible* the correct answer *indisputable* is usually marked by college men, but of the remaining four choices *unsound* is by far most popular. In the phrase 'You allay my fears,'—where the five choices are *justify*, *calm*, *arouse*, *increase*, and *confirm*,—*calm* is usually answered by the educated group, but *arouse* is next most popular. In the phrase 'He retracts his criticism,' *withdraws* is the correct answer and *repeats* is the most common delusion. In 'He vented his wrath,' *poured forth* is correct and *restrained* is the commonest misapprehension.

One need but turn to words of which one is not quite certain to see how difficult it is to distinguish opposites. One evening at

dinner with a delightful Dean of education, we fell to discussing this question. He recognized *cathode* and *anode* instantly as electrical terms designating the two poles, but hesitated a moment before saying which was which. *Port* and *starboard* he admitted he had never straightened out and resorted to some such phrase as 'Jack left port.' *Gee* and *haw* were beyond him. He surmised that they meant *up* and *down*, but said frankly he did not know the words. When told that they were used in ploughing, he was instantly interested, but did not care at all which was which. He was taking the first step in the learning process, placing them in their correct environment. The fifty-two per cent of college graduates who choose *invigorating* as the meaning of *enervating* are on the verge of knowing the word. The dictum of modern education, never to teach what a thing is not, has perhaps come from a realization of this confusion of opposites. The confusion seems, however, to be a natural step in the learning process.

## V

In the study of human beings the factors involved are so numerous and so intertwined with one another that the experimenter, in unraveling the strands, must pause periodically to make certain that he is progressing. What then has been discovered? An exact and extensive vocabulary is an important concomitant of success. So much is known. Furthermore, such a vocabulary can be acquired. It increases as long as an individual remains in school or college, but without conscious effort does not change materially thereafter.

There may be some subtle distinction between a natural vocabulary picked up at home, at meals, and in reading, and one gained by a study of the dictionary. The latter may not be as valuable as the former. But there is nothing to show that it is harmful and the balance of evidence at the moment suggests that such a consciously, even laboriously, achieved vocabulary is an active asset.

←End timing

RECORD HERE THE TIME REQUIRED ON  
THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_ MIN. \_\_\_\_ SEC.

## COMPREHENSION TEST

Check the main idea:

1. The high vocabulary scores of business executives was unexpected.
2. Words are the tools of thinking.
3. Effective schooling accounts for large vocabularies.
4. Few people add to their vocabularies after leaving school.
5. Foreign students have larger vocabularies than natives.
6. An exact and extensive vocabulary is an important prerequisite to success.
7. An exact and extensive vocabulary characterizes successful people.

*Key:* Subtract one from five and add three to determine the number of the correct answer.

### TIME CHART

TIME	W.P.M.	TIME	W.P.M.
5 min.	817	10 min.	408
5 min., 30 sec.	742	11 min.	371
6 min.	681	12 min.	340
6 min., 30 sec.	628	13 min.	314
7 min.	583	14 min.	292
7 min., 30 sec.	544	15 min.	272
8 min.	511	16 min.	255
8 min., 30 sec.	481	17 min.	240
9 min.	454	18 min.	227

RECORD YOUR RATE ON THIS SELECTION: \_\_\_\_\_ W.P.M.

Plot this rate on your progress graph.

Now compute your statistics on this chapter as you did in chapters V and VII.

ORIGINAL RATE (PAGE 13):	_____ W.P.M.
AVERAGE RATE IN THIS CHAPTER:	_____ W.P.M.
GAIN:	_____ W.P.M.
PERCENTAGE GAIN:	_____ PER CENT

## Epilogue—Final Words

I should like to suggest that this is not the end of your training period, even though you have faithfully covered every page in the book, have worked hard for months, and have noted a comfortable increase in your general reading speed of, for the sake of argument, 25 to 75 per cent.

I should like to suggest further that this is only the beginning.

Your training program, however successful, has given you the initial push, the necessary momentum. It has got you well started.

Now you have to go on by yourself.

Books and magazines are, of course, published faster than you or anyone else can ever hope to read them. To say nothing of the vast output of the past with which you might want to catch up.

If you read twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, for the rest of your life, you could scarcely make a dent in the volume of material that is available for reading—I grant that.

But put your training to use. With the increased skill and speed you now possess, you can do twice and three times the reading you used to do in any given period of time. You can do this, that is, if you form the habit of reading—if you make reading of magazines, novels, general books as much a regular part of your life as eating, or sleeping, or going to the movies, or visiting your friends, or taking a bath.

Set yourself a goal—let no week go by in which you haven't read at least one book, of whatever nature. And if you can manage to make it two or three books some weeks, so much the better.

You will make no dent in the available reading material. But what a change you will effect in your own intellectual equipment, in your store of knowledge and ideas, in your alertness to what is going on in the world.

Or I can give you a far more potent and convincing reason—you'll enjoy it, you'll have a wonderful time. Reading, you will discover, is one of the great and satisfying pleasures of human living.



## APPENDIX A

### ALPHABETICAL CHECK LIST OF RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Abraham Lincoln*, by Carl Sandburg (Harcourt, Brace)  
*An American Doctor's Odyssey*, by Victor Heiser (Norton)  
*Arrival and Departure*, by Arthur Koestler (Macmillan)  
\**Art for Art's Sake*, by Albert Guérard (Lothrop, Lee & Shepard)  
*The Art of Enjoying Art*, by A. Philip MacMahon (McGraw-Hill)  
*The Art of Thinking*, by Abbé Ernest Dimnet (Simon and Schuster)  
*The Arts*, by Hendrik Willem van Loon (Simon and Schuster)  
The Bible  
*Black Lamb and Grey Falcon*, by Rebecca West (Viking)  
*Capital*, by Karl Marx (Modern Library)  
*Captain Horatio Hornblower*, by C. S. Forester (Little, Brown)  
*Cartoon Cavalcade*, edited by Thomas Craven (Simon and Schuster)  
*Citizen Tom Paine*, by Howard M. Fast (Duell, Sloan & Pearce)  
*Collected Poems of Edwin Arlington Robinson* (Macmillan)  
*Collected Works of Mrs. Peter Willoughby*, by Mary Elizabeth Plummer (Little, Brown)  
*The Command of Words*, by S. Stephenson Smith (Crowell)  
*Country Lawyer*, by Bellamy Partridge (Whittlesey House)  
*Crime and Punishment*, by Feodor Dostoevski (Dutton)  
*Crisis of Our Age*, by Pitirim Sorokin (Dutton)  
*The Crusades*, by Konrad Bercovici (Cosmopolitan Book Corp.)  
*Darkness at Noon*, by Arthur Koestler (Macmillan)  
*Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, by Edward Gibbon (Dutton)  
*Dissenting Opinions of Mr. Justice Holmes*, edited by Alfred Lief (Vanguard)  
\**The Doctor looks at Love and Life*, by Joseph Collins (New Home Library)  
*The Editor and His People*, by William Allen White (Macmillan)

\* Now out of print.

*The Education of Henry Adams, An Autobiography* (Houghton Mifflin)  
*English Vocabulary Builder*, by Johnson O'Connor (Human Engineering Laboratory)  
*English Words and Their Background*, by G. H. MacKnight (Appleton-Century-Crofts)  
*Essays*, by Ralph Waldo Emerson (Houghton Mifflin)  
*Evenings with Music*, by Syd Skolsky (Dutton)  
*\*Exploring Your Mind*, by Albert Edward Wiggam (Blue Ribbon Books)  
*\*The Face Is Familiar*, by Ogden Nash (Little, Brown)  
*\*Fantastic Interim*, by Henry Morton Robinson (Harcourt, Brace)  
*Giants in the Earth*, by O. E. Rölvaag (Harper)  
*Good Night, Sweet Prince*, by Gene Fowler (Viking)  
*\*The Good Soldier Schweik*, by Jaroslav Hasek (Sun Dial)  
*The Great Answer*, by Margaret Lee Runbeck (Houghton Mifflin)  
*\*Green Mansions*, by W. H. Hudson (Grosset & Dunlap)  
*Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare  
*H. M. Pulham, Esq.*, by John P. Marquand (Little, Brown)  
*\*Hold Autumn in Your Hand*, by George Sessions Perry (Viking)  
*How to Build a Better Vocabulary*, by Maxwell Nurnberg and W. T. Rhodes (Prentice-Hall)  
*How to Double Your Vocabulary*, by S. Stephenson Smith (Crowell)  
*The Human Body*, by Logan Clendening, M.D. (Alfred A. Knopf)  
*The Human Mind*, by Karl A. Menninger (Alfred A. Knopf)  
*Hunger*, by Knut Hamsun (Alfred A. Knopf)  
*The Iliad*, by Homer  
*Improvement of Reading*, by Louella Cole, Ph.D. (Rinehart)  
*Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, by Bertrand Russell (Macmillan)  
*Language in Action*, by S. I. Hayakawa (Harcourt, Brace)  
*Lanny Budd Series* (*Between Two Worlds, Wide Is the Gate, Dragon's Teeth, Presidential Agent*, etc.), by Upton Sinclair (Viking)  
*Liberal Education*, by Mark Van Doren (Holt)  
*Life: A Psychological Survey*, by Pressey, Janney, and Kuhlen (Harper)  
*The Lost Weekend*, by Charles Jackson (Rinehart)  
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- \**Marks of an Educated Man*, by Albert Edward Wiggam (Bobbs-Merrill)
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- Of Human Bondage*, by W. Somerset Maugham (Doubleday)
- \**Only Yesterday*, by Frederick Lewis Allen (Harper)
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- \**Since Yesterday*, by Frederick Lewis Allen (Harper)
- So Little Time*, by John P. Marquand (Little, Brown)
- South Wind*, by Norman Douglas (Macmillan)
- The Star-Gazer*, by Zsolt Harsanyi\* (Putnam)
- \**The Store*, by T. S. Stribling (Doubleday)
- Story of Philosophy*, by Will Durant (Simon and Schuster)
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*Twelve Ways to Build a Vocabulary*, by Archibald Hart (Dutton)  
*U.S. War Aims*, by Walter Lippmann (Little, Brown)  
*Wind in the Sahara*, by R. V. C. Bodley (Creative Age)  
*Wisdom of China and India*, edited by Lin Yutang (Random House)  
*Word Wealth*, by Ward S. Miller (Holt)  
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*Word Origins and Their Romantic Histories*, by Wilfred Funk (Wilfred Funk, Inc.)  
*Word Power Made Easy—The Complete Three-Week Vocabulary Builder*, by Norman Lewis (Doubleday)  
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*Yankee from Olympus*, by Catherine Drinker Bowen (Little, Brown)

## REVIEW TESTS IN VOCABULARY

*For Section 1*

1. aberration . . . . .wandering	14. adulation . . . . .contempt
2. abject . . . . .haughty	15. affluence . . . . .wealth
3. abominable . . . .detestable	16. agnostic . . . .non-believer
4. abortive . . . . .successful	17. alacrity . . . . .hesitation
5. abstemious . . . .greedy	18. alleviate . . . . .worsen
6. abstruse . . . . .perspicuous	19. altruism . . . . .egoism
7. acerbity . . . . .mildness	20. ambidextrous . . . . .
8. acme . . . . .nadir	. . . . .right-handed
9. acid . . . . .caustic	21. ambiguous . . . . .clear
10. acrimonious . . .friendly	22. ameliorate . . .make better
11. acumen . . . .discernment	23. amenable . . . .agreeable
12. adamant . . . . .stubborn	24. amenities . . .conventions
13. adroit . . . . .awkward	25. amorphous . . . .shapeless

*Which word fits the definition?*

1. A person or object of intense loathing:  
*a*—anachronism, *b*—analogy, *c*—anathema
2. A soothing agent:  
*a*—animosity, *b*—anodyne, *c*—anomaly
3. Similar to mankind:  
*a*—anthropoid, *b*—anthropological, *c*—anticyclimactic
4. Causing sexual excitement:  
*a*—antipathy, *b*—antithesis, *c*—aphrodisiac
5. Of doubtful authenticity:  
*a*—aplomb, *b*—apocryphal, *c*—arbitrary

6. Refraining from sensual pleasures:  
*a*—archaic, *b*—argot, *c*—ascetic
7. Crafty:  
*a*—assiduous, *b*—assuaging, *c*—astute
8. Reversion to a more primitive type:  
*a*—atavism, *b*—atheism, *c*—attrition

### For Section 3

Referring to the words in section 3, choose a word *opposite* in meaning to each of the following words, and write its number next to that word:

- |                                    |                      |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1. ruled by an outside agent ..... | 4. urban .....       |
| 2. a curse .....                   | 5. timid .....       |
| 3. serious talk .....              | 6. sweet sound ..... |
|                                    | 7. praise .....      |

Choose a word *similar* in meaning to each of the following:

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 8. greed .....                           | 13. rhythmical flow of language ..... |
| 9. anticlimax .....                      | 14. persuade by artful flattery ..... |
| 10. cowlike .....                        | 15. scandal .....                     |
| 11. a commonplace notion or phrase ..... |                                       |
| 12. corpse-like .....                    |                                       |

### For Section 4

Write the number of a word in section 4 which has some relationship to each of the following:

- |                     |                        |
|---------------------|------------------------|
| 1. meat .....       | 9. fear .....          |
| 2. whip .....       | 10. sympathy .....     |
| 3. plumpness .....  | 11. secrecy .....      |
| 4. regret .....     | 12. thinking .....     |
| 5. patriotism ..... | 13. satisfaction ..... |
| 6. trickery .....   | 14. arguments .....    |
| 7. bachelors .....  | 15. imagination .....  |
| 8. force .....      |                        |

### For Section 5

Write the number of a word in section 5 which has some relationship to each of the following.

- |                            |                            |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. secrets .....           | 9. death .....             |
| 2. cooking .....           | 10. harm .....             |
| 3. guilt .....             | 11. plunder .....          |
| 4. superficiality .....    | 12. skill .....            |
| 5. paucity .....           | 13. timidity .....         |
| 6. sensual pleasures ..... | 14. liquor .....           |
| 7. dignity .....           | 15. state of undress ..... |
| 8. destruction .....       |                            |

*For Section 6*

Referring to the words in this section, write the number of that word which fits each definition.

- |                                |                                   |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. known only to a few .....   | 9. imitate something              |
| 2. abstain from .....          | worthy .....                      |
| 3. purposely ambiguous .....   | 10. arbitrary .....               |
| 4. mental calmness .....       | 11. doubtful .....                |
| 5. outstandingly bad .....     | 12. melodious .....               |
| 6. high praise .....           | 13. sullen .....                  |
| 7. mysterious .....            | 14. high spirits .....            |
| 8. take all strength from .... | 15. weakened by soft living ..... |

*For Section 7*

*True or false?*

1. Poets have a reputation for looking *ethereal*.
2. One generally *eulogizes* one's enemies.
3. People of delicate feelings are prone to use *euphemisms*.
4. *Euphony* is the opposite of cacophony.
5. If something is *evanescent* it is practically permanent.
6. Cumquats are an *exotic* fruit.
7. To *expedite* is to delay.
8. Silly people are *fatuous*.
9. One cannot doubt the *fecundity* of the mother of eighteen children.
10. Germany's attempt to master the world turned into a *fasco*.
11. *Frugal* people are prodigal.
12. A *fractious* child is docile.

For Section 8

True or false?

1. Sneaky people are *furtive*.
2. Hermits are *gregarious*.
3. A *gullible* person is rarely deceived.
4. A *gynecologist* has many female patients.
5. During a war, one may truthfully say, "These are *halcyon* times."
6. Ours is a *heterogeneous* population.
7. Orators occasionally use *histrionic* gestures.
8. Campaign orators generally indulge in *hyperbole*.
9. Many people have died of *hypochondria*.
10. Young people tend to be more *iconoclastic* than their elders.
11. *Ignominy* causes embarrassment.
12. The Japanese soldiers believed in self-*immolation* for their emperor.

For Section 9

Same or opposite?

- |                                      |                                 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. imperturbable .....               | 10. incongruous .....clashing   |
| .....phlegmatic                      | 11. incorrigible .....docile    |
| 2. implacable .....adamant           | 12. incredulous .....gullible   |
| 3. impious .....irreligious          | 13. indefatigable .....tireless |
| 4. impugn .....question the truth of | 14. indigent .....wealthy       |
| 5. impunity .....punishment          | 15. indolence .....ambition     |
| 6. inadvertent ...thoughtless        | 16. ineffable ...inexpressible  |
| 7. inane .....intelligent            | 17. inexorable .....adamant     |
| 8. incipient .....beginning          | 18. ingenuous .....naive        |
| 9. inclement .....mild               | 19. iniquity .....wickedness    |
|                                      | 20. insipid .....flavorful      |

For Section 10

Same or opposite?

- |                                |                               |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. insouciant .....indifferent | 7. irascible .....pleasant    |
| 2. intractable .....docile     | 8. itinerant .....motionless  |
| 3. intransigent .....          | 9. jingoism .....pacifism     |
| .....uncompromising            | 10. jubilation .....sorrow    |
| 4. intrepid .....fearless      | 11. laconic .....verbose      |
| 5. introversion .....          | 12. lampoon .....satirize     |
| .....extroversion              | 13. lascivious .....lecherous |
| 6. inundate .....dry up        | 14. latent .....hidden        |



- |                              |                               |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 15. lethargy ..... animation | 18. limpid ..... muddy        |
| 16. levity ..... seriousness | 19. lithe ..... agile         |
| 17. limbo ..... oblivion     | 20. loquacious ..... taciturn |

### For Section 11

*Same or opposite?*

- |                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. lugubrious ..... happy       | 12. meretricious .....          |
| 2. machiavellian .. ingenuous   | ..... falsely alluring          |
| 3. malaise ..... euphoria       | 13. metamorphosis .... change   |
| 4. malediction ..... curse      | 14. meticulous ..... careless   |
| 5. malevolent ..... kind        | 15. mendacity ..... veracity    |
| 6. to malign ..... praise       | 16. méphistophelian .. devilish |
| 7. manic ..... insane           | 17. mercurial ..... heavy       |
| 8. maudlin ..... tearful        | 18. melange ..... mixture       |
| 9. mayhem ..... kindness        | 19. malefactor ..... criminal   |
| 10. megalomania ... diffidence  | 20. malinger ..... shirk        |
| 11. mellifluous ... acrimonious |                                 |

### For Section 12

Without further reference to section 12, write the correct word next to each definition.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. hatred of mankind M.....                        | 13. a beginner N.....                        |
| 2. hatred of women M.....                          | 14. a delicate shade of meaning N.....       |
| 3. to soften M.....                                | 15. stubbornly hard-hearted O.....           |
| 4. biting M.....                                   | 16. to confuse purposely O.....              |
| 5. dying M.....                                    | 17. limbo; state of forgetful neglect O..... |
| 6. to cheat M.....                                 | 18. bad repute O.....                        |
| 7. a great number M.....                           | 19. fawning, bootlicking O.....              |
| 8. the lowest point N.....                         | 20. doctor who delivers babies O.....        |
| 9. unworldly; inexperienced N.....                 |  |
| 10. vague, cloudy N.....                           |  |
| 11. wicked N.....                                  |  |
| 12. political favoritism to one's relatives N..... |  |

### For Section 13

Without further reference to section 13, write the correct word next to each definition.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. dull O.....                             | 12. a song of exultation P.....                                       |
| 2. mysterious O.....                       | 13. pale P.....   |
| 3. foreboding evil O.....                  | 14. readily seen or understood P.....                                 |
| 4. all-powerful O.....                     | 15. cure-all P.....   |
| 5. found everywhere O.....                 | 16. a speech of praise P.....   |
| 6. all-wise O.....                         | 17. a perfect type P.....   |
| 7. stubbornly set in one's opinions O..... | 18. delusions of persecution P.....                                   |
| 8. wealth O.....                           | 19. niggardly P.....  |
| 9. traditional O.....                      | 20. eager to show one's knowledge, usually in an offensive way P..... |
| 10. get used to O.....                     |   |
| 11. have no social intercourse with O..... |   |

*For Section 14*

*Which word fits the definition?*

1. *Treacherous*: a—penurious, b—perfidious, c—perfunctory
2. *Mental keenness*: a—peripheral, b—persiflage, c—perspicacity
3. *Clearness*: a—perspicuity, b—pathology, c—pediatrics
4. *Placid*: a—peonage, b—philandering, c—phlegmatic
5. *Resentment*: a—pique, b—plaintiveness, c—placate
6. *Commonplace*: a—precipitous, b—plebeian, c—penurious
7. *An excess*: a—plethora, b—poignancy, c—platitude
8. *Speaking many languages*: a—pompous, b—portentous, c—polyglot
9. *After the death of its creator*: a—pragmatic, b—preclusive, c—posthumous
10. *Diseased*: a—pathological, b—peripheral, c—poignant

*For Section 15*

*Which word fits the definition?*

1. *Seize upon*: a—presage, b—pre-empt, c—propitiate
2. *Plundering*: a—predatory, b—presumptuous, c—prodigal
3. *Wasteful*: a—prodigious, b—prodigal, c—prolific
4. *Fertile*: a—prolific, b—prolix, c—promiscuous
5. *Commonplace*: a—prurient, b—prosaic, c—pseudo
6. *Mentally diseased*: a—psychotic, b—pugnacious, c—puerile
7. *Overly careful*: a—querulous, b—punctilious, c—pungent
8. *Petty*: a—pusillanimous, b—pungent, c—punctilious
9. *Morbid interest in fire*: a—puberty, b—prurience, c—pyromania
10. *Unusual*: a—prodigious, b—prosaic, c—pseudo

### For Section 16

#### Same or opposite?

- |                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. recalcitrant . . . . . obedient | 6. relevant . . . . . pertinent   |
| 2. recondite . . . . . concealed   | 7. renegade . . . . . faithful    |
| 3. recrimination . . . . .         | 8. resilient . . . . . inflexible |
| . . . . . counter accusation       | 9. risible . . . . . mournful     |
| 4. redolent . . . . . remindful    | 10. rotund . . . . . meager       |
| 5. redundant . . . . . repetitive  |                                   |

### For Section 17

#### True or false?

1. Impious people are often *sacrilegious*.
2. Cruel people are *sadistic*.
3. Wise people possess *sagacity*.
4. Battles are generally *sanguinary*.
5. An optimistic person is *sanguine*.
6. Sane people are frequently sufferers from *schizophrenia*.
7. It is pleasant to hear a *sepulchral* voice.
8. Sloth is a characteristic of *ambitious* people.

### For Section 18

#### Same or opposite?

- |                                    |                                   |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. soporific . . . . . stimulating | 8. succinct . . . . . prolix      |
| 2. specious . . . . . true         | 9. summary . . . . . delayed      |
| 3. sporadic . . . . . continuous   | 10. supercilious . . . . . humble |
| 4. stilted . . . . . fresh         | 11. surreptitious . . . . .       |
| 5. strident . . . . . sweet        | . . . . . above-board             |
| 6. stringent . . . . . severe      | 12. tedium . . . . . boredom      |
| 7. suave . . . . . persuasive      |                                   |

### For Section 19

Referring to the words in this section, write the number of that word which fits each definition.

- |                                     |                                |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. rashness . . . . .               | 7. sluggish . . . . .          |
| 2. play for time . . . . .          | 8. poisonous . . . . .         |
| 3. thin . . . . .                   | 9. admitting light . . . . .   |
| 4. healing . . . . .                | 10. grotesque parody . . . . . |
| 5. very large . . . . .             | 11. penetrating . . . . .      |
| 6. pleasurable excitement . . . . . | 12. swollen . . . . .          |
|                                     | 13. a beginner . . . . .       |

- |                            |                    |
|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 14. found everywhere ..... | 17. polished ..... |
| 15. official decree .....  | 18. fierce .....   |
| 16. scold .....            |                    |

### *For Section 20*

Referring to the words in this section, write the number of that word which fits each definition:

- |                           |                         |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. waver mentally .....   | 11. strong, manly ..... |
| 2. empty .....            | 12. expert .....        |
| 3. whim .....             | 13. harmful .....       |
| 4. stagnate .....         | 14. weaken .....        |
| 5. truthfulness .....     | 15. caustic .....       |
| 6. word for word .....    | 16. mercurial .....     |
| 7. wordy .....            | 17. loquacious .....    |
| 8. likeness to life ..... | 18. whirlpool .....     |
| 9. change .....           | 19. unrestricted .....  |
| 10. vengeful .....        | 20. highest point ..... |

### *Answers to the Review Tests*

#### *Section 1*

1—S, 2—O, 3—S, 4—O, 5—O, 6—O, 7—O, 8—O, 9—S, 10—O,  
11—S, 12—S, 13—O, 14—O, 15—S, 16—S, 17—O, 18—O, 19—O,  
20—O, 21—O, 22—S, 23—S, 24—S, 25—S

#### *Section 2*

1—c, 2—b, 3—a, 4—c, 5—b, 6—c, 7—c, 8—a

#### *Section 3*

1—53, 2—60, 3—56, 4—67, 5—68, 6—69, 7—73, 8—54, 9—58,  
10—65, 11—66, 12—70, 13—71, 14—72, 15—73

#### *Section 4*

1—76, 2—78, 3—100, 4—91, 93, or 98, 5—82, 6—83, 7—81, 8—88,  
9—87, 10—91, 11—86, 12—89 or 90, 13—92, 14—97, 15—84

#### *Section 5*

1—102, 2—103, 3—104, 4—106, 5—108, 6—109, 7—111, 8—110,  
9—112, 10—113, 11—115, 12—118, 13—119, 14—121, 15—122

### Section 6

1—149, 2—148, 3—147, 4—146, 5—136, 6—140, 7—142, 8—137,  
9—139, 10—126, 11—129, 12—130, 13—128, 14—132 or 133, 15—  
134

### Section 7

1—T, 2—F, 3—T, 4—T, 5—F, 6—T, 7—F, 8—T, 9—T, 10—T,  
11—F, 12—F

### Section 8

1—T, 2—F, 3—F, 4—T, 5—F, 6—T, 7—T, 8—T, 9—F, 10—T,  
11—T, 12—T

### Section 9

1—S, 2—S, 3—S, 4—S, 5—O, 6—S, 7—O, 8—S, 9—O, 10—S,  
11—O, 12—O, 13—S, 14—O, 15—O, 16—S, 17—S, 18—S, 19—S,  
20—O

### Section 10

1—S, 2—O, 3—S, 4—S, 5—O, 6—O, 7—O, 8—O, 9—O, 10—O,  
11—O, 12—S, 13—S, 14—S, 15—O, 16—O, 17—S, 18—O, 19—S,  
20—O

### Section 11

1—O, 2—O, 3—O, 4—S, 5—O, 6—O, 7—S, 8—S, 9—O, 10—O,  
11—O, 12—S, 13—S, 14—O, 15—O, 16—S, 17—O, 18—S, 19—S,  
20—S

### Section 12

1—misanthropy, 2—misogyny, 3—mitigate or mollify, 4—mor-  
dant, 5—moribund, 6—mulct, 7—myriad, 8—nadir, 9—naive, 10—  
nebulous, 11—nefarious, 12—nepotism, 13—novitiate, 14—nuance,  
15—obdurate, 16—obfuscate, 17—oblivion, 18—obloquy, 19—  
obsequious, 20—obstetrician

### Section 13

1—obtuse, 2—occult, 3—ominous, 4—omnipotent, 5—omnipres-  
ent, 6—omniscient, 7—opinionated, 8—opulence, 9—orthodox,  
10—orient, 11—ostracize, 12—paean, 13—pallid, 14—palpable,  
15—panacea, 16—panegyric, 17—paragon, 18—paranoia, 19—  
parsimonious, 20—pedantic

*Section 14*

1—b, 2—c, 3—a, 4—c, 5—a, 6—b, 7—a, 8—c, 9—c, 10—a

*Section 15*

1—b, 2—a, 3—b, 4—a, 5—b, 6—a, 7—b, 8—a, 9—c, 10—a

*Section 16*

1—O, 2—S, 3—S, 4—S, 5—S, 6—S, 7—O, 8—O, 9—O, 10—O

*Section 17*

1—T, 2—T, 3—T, 4—T, 5—T, 6—F, 7—F, 8—F

*Section 18*

1—O, 2—O, 3—O, 4—O, 5—O, 6—S, 7—S, 8—O, 9—O, 10—O,  
11—O, 12—S

*Section 19*

1—451, 2—452, 3—454, 4—455, 5—456, 6—457, 7—458, 8—459,  
9—460, 10—461, 11—462, 12—466, 13—467, 14—468, 15—469,  
16—473, 17—474, 18—464

*Section 20*

1—476, 2—477 or 479, 3—478, 4—480, 5—482, 6—483, 7—484,  
8—485, 9—487, 10—488, 11—489, 12—490, 13—491, 14—493,  
15—494, 16—496, 17—497, 18—498, 19—499, 20—500

